Boku wa Tomodachi ga Sukunai Volume 04

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These are novel illustrations that were included in Volume 4

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４巻の原稿を書いているとき同窓会の案内が来たのですが読まずに捨てました。

【イラストレーター】

ブリキ

家から20メートル程の幼なじみの家に行くだけで息が切れます…歳ですね。

カバーイラスト／ブリキ　装丁／blue

MF文庫 J
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僕は友達が少ない④
平坂読
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メディアファクトリー

僕は友達が少ない④

夏休み明けに衝撃的な出来事があったものの、羽瀬川小鷹は相変わらず友達のいない学校生活を送っていた。一方隣人部では、夜空に触発されて他の部員たちまでイメチェンに挑戦したり、手つかずだった小鳩の夏休みの宿題をみんなで手伝ったり、BLアニメを鑑賞したりと、これまでどおりの残念で賑やかな日常が繰り広げられるのだった。しかし、一見前と変わらない様子の夜空が、たまに可愛い素振りを見せることが……。これはもしかして――デレ期？　一方星奈の父・天馬と小鷹の仲も深まったり――。大人気残念系青春ラブコメ第四弾、僕たちの熱く残念な季節は終わらない！

僕は友達が少ない 4

平坂読

Yomi Hirasaka

【Illustrator トーキ】

友情

「私がソラなのでした!!
なにか感想は!?」

「ええと……びっくりした」

残念ここに極まれり

毎晩寝るときに夜空のバカ面を見ながら
夜空のかぶったカツラの臭いをかぐことで
あいつに味わわされた屈辱を思い返して、
いつかあのバカをとっちめてやるって
気持ちを奮い立たせてるの

「問題出してよ問題!
どんだけ難しいやつでもいいから!」

「いい。貴様と答え合わせしても
楽しくない」

「ちょっ、
中二のときの隣の席の山本さんと
同じこと言わないでよ!」

浮腐部

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Reunion: Part II

The first day after the end of summer break, September first, during our homeroom period.

Yozora Mikadzuki, who entered the classroom while our teacher was taking attendance.

Everyone in the class was surprised when they saw Yozora walk in. The beautiful long black hair that went down to her waist that she had up until about a week ago, was all cut off, leaving her with hair so short it barely reached her neck.

However, for me, the surprise did not end there.

Yozora's face with her hair cut looked exactly like the boy who I took as my best friend and with whom I parted 10 years ago. I turned to face her, and murmured that old best friend's nickname.

"————Sora?"

Then Yozora followed, while staring at me with moist eyes filled with innumerable emotions and a faint smile, and said, without a doubt, in a slightly trembling voice,

"————It's been a long time, Taka."

My gut feeling wasn't mistaken.

It was Yozora, who was my old best friend, Sora.

Back then, Sora always talked like a guy, and was taller than me , and dressed in guy's clothes, so I always assumed she was a guy.

"Uhh... Hasegawa?"

"Ah!"

The teacher's suspicious attitude brought me back to my senses, and I quickly sat back down.

Yozora acted as if nothing had happened, averted her eyes from me while wiping the smile from her face, and walked over to her seat.

The classroom was full of people talking until Yozora sat back down, and when the teacher started taking attendance again it mostly subsided.

After taking attendance, our teacher went on about "Did you guys all do your summer homework" and "Let's all change modes and give it our best." and other typical stuff teachers ramble on about after a long break, but none of it really stuck with me.

My eyes were fixated on Yozora, whose appearance had changed so dramatically since summer break.

It doesn't seem like I'll be able to "change modes" so easily.

As for Yozora, she simply kept staring forward as if to ignore the inquisitive stares of our classmates and myself.

A short while after, the first homeroom of September ended and we moved into break time.

"H-hey."

I walked over to Yozora's seat and called out to her.

I was lost on whether to call her "Yozora" or "Sora" and in the end I decided to avoid the subject completely.

Feeling the stares of everyone else in the class on us feels really awkward.

"...What?"

Yozora replied with a deep voice in her default sullen mood. It was as if those tears and faint smile from just 10 minutes ago were all a lie.

"Well... um, what happened to your hair?"

I asked straight out, still not sure whether I should or not.

"I cut it."

Her response was as short and cold as you could get.

"No, I can tell that just by looking. I'm asking... why all of a sudden?"

Yozora's face became even more and more annoyed before saying, "...The night of the summer festival." and nothing else.

The night of the summer festival...

The members of the Neighbors Club Yozora and I belong to went to a festival, and played with fireworks in a nearby park afterwards.

When we did, one of the big fireworks set Yozora's hair on fire, and ended up singeing the tips of her hair.

"But that was just the tip, wasn't it? You didn't have to lop it all off."

I said, but that only made Yozora's face get angrier and angrier.

She then said, emphasizing her speech,

"It's because you dumped that whole load on me. No matter how much I washed it, it wouldn't all come out and it smelled weird. It was all completely ruined...!!"

Yozora pursed her lips slightly while fiddling with her bangs.

"S-sorry..."

I apologized.

When Yozora's hair caught on fire, I frantically grabbed the bucket we put the fireworks in, and... dumped the whole bucket, dirty water and all, all over Yozora's head.

Now that I look back on it, I could've put the fire out without going to that extreme.

I truly think that was a really horrible thing of me to do.

I'll reflect on it from the bottom of my heart.

"I'm really, you know... sorry."

I apologize, again.

However, Yozora only made a more unsatisfied look on her face .

"...Muuu... more importantly-"

As she begun to speak, the whispers over our classmates entered my ears.

"...He dumped his load on her...?" "...Just the tip? He forced her to go all the way... because it was only the tip..." "He forced himself on Mikadzuki..." "R-rape...?" "A bad choice on a summer night..." " He dumped a load of white fluid on her hair that left a smell she couldn't wash out..." "Dumped his load on her..." "Dumped his load on her..."

""!!""

Our faces both turned to stone.

I get the feeling they're getting an incredibly wrong idea about this!!

"N-n- It's all a mis- Calling it a white fluid-"

"C-come with me!"

Yozora stood up, her face a deep shade of red, and dragged me out of the classroom as I tried to explain what really happened in a panic.

I could tell the uproar in the classroom only got louder.

...Barely a few minutes into the new school term and I've got another awful rumor about me floating around.

Yozora dragged me all the way to an empty stairwell at the side of the school.

"...We should be ok here."

Yozora said, releasing my hand.

"Uu... Another fake rumor..."

I hung my head about to cry, but Yozora only sighed in displeasure.

"Hmph, it's not that big a deal."

"...No, it is a big deal."

"Anyway, more importantly!"

Yozora stared at me with a powerful gaze.

"More importantly?"

I asked, puzzled as to what she was getting at.

As I stood there, Yozora's cheeks went a little red, and her eyes started swimming in a fluster.

"W-well... umm... more importantly, I mean..."

I was taken aback even more by Yozora's rare stammering.

"I mean, I'm talking about, you know!"

Yozora said like a spoiled child as her face went deep red.

"I'm Sora!! Don't you have anything to say!?"

I don't know what I'm even *supposed* to say.

"Umm... I was surprised."

友情

「私がソラなのでした!!
なにか感想は!?」

「ええと……びっくりした」

I couldn't think of anything good to say, so I went with that.

"Muu... is that all?"

Yozora pouted her lips, obviously unsatisfied with my answer.

"What else would there be?"

"You know, like... y-you're happy, or honored, or moved or something!"

"I really don't know what to say... I dunno, it's like I'm stunned or something... Saying 'I was surprised' is probably the best way to put it..."

I said while scratching my head.

There's tons I want to ask her.

Why did she wear guy's clothes 10 years ago?

When did she realize I was Taka?

What's she been doing these past 10 years?

Why did she never show up at the park when we both promised to tell each other "something important"?

There's too much, so much I can't put it into words.

I kept staring back at Yozora, staring at me with a childish look of disappointment on her face.

I stared at her slender eyebrows, her thin eyes, her cheeks dyed red.

That short hair looks really good on an androgynous beauty like her.

"You know, that haircut looks pretty good on you."

"Waa- Idi-!!"

I spat out what I was thinking on a whim, and Yozora's face red deep red from ear to ear.

Yozora looked down at the ground in embarrassment.

"......I-I don't look weird?"

Yozora looked strangely cute, asking me that while looking up at me like with puppy dog eyes, causing my face to heat up unexpectedly.

"N-nope. You don't look weird at all."

"I-I see."

Yozora's mouth looked like it was about to break into a smile as she went back to looking at the ground.

She then raised her face, and with a tiny bit of pride said,

"I-I mustered up the courage to go to a hair salon. That was the first time in about 10 years."

"10 years...? Eh, what'd you do about your hair then?"

"I cut it myself."

"Why would you..."

"Obviously because I'm scared of going to a hair salon."

Yozora replied, acting like she had something to be proud of.

"Shops like that where you have to have casual conversation with their stylish employees take quite a bit of effort to enter. Honestly, I never want to go again. Why do those people all act so over-friendly and try to talk to me so much? They ask me what school I go to, what year I'm in, if I'm in any clubs, what music I like, if I have a b-boyfriend, and all kinds of other stuff. What the hell does it matter to them?"

I'm guessing Yozora remembered her time at the hair salon, judging by this stream of complaints.

Although, I can't say I don't know how she feels.

I worked up the courage to go to a hair salon once during my spring break just before entering high school, but I didn't fit in there at all, and ever since I've always gone to a normal barber.

There's also the fact that the beautician guy there laughed as he asked "Did you try to dye it yourself?" which pissed me off.

...Not that this is of any importance to what's going on now.

"But yeah, I'm pretty amazed you managed to cut it yourself this whole time."

"It's easy to cut my bangs if I have a mirror. The back... takes a lot of work, so I rarely cut it."

"So that's how it got so long..."

"Yep," Yozora nodded.

"Anyway, I think working up the courage to go to a hair salon was the right idea."

"D-does it really look good on me?"

I nodded with a "Yeah." to answer Yozora's question.

"I had them do that too. What was it... jagi...?"

"Jaggy?"

"Yeah, that's it."

Yozora acted shy as she lightly stroked the back of her hair.

"Hmph... It was annoying listening to that beautician go on about how "It's so totally a waste to cut this beautiful hair~" in his

overly-familiar tone of voice, though it would seem he did have some skill after all."

Yozora said, seemingly satisfied.

Right after she did, the bell signaling the start of first period rang.

"Crap, we need to get back."

"I suppose so."

I don't even wanna know how bad the rumors would get if we both skipped out on class.

We were both quickly walking down the hallway to our classroom.

"Oh yeah."

I stopped as I thought of something.

I had forgotten about something really important.

"?"

Yozora turned around in confusion, and I asked her,

"What should I call you from now on?"

A slight tinge of hesitation rose to Yozora's face.

After a short while, Yozora answered with a forced smile on her face.

"Call me 'Yozora'. Just like you have been."

I nodded as if to say that was ok with me.

"Ok then, let's go back—— 'Kodaka'."

Yozora turned around, and started quickly walking to the classroom again.

I thought to myself as I watched Yozora from behind, about the day she made the Neighbors Club.

After telling me to call her just plain "Yozora", she told me.

She told me that nicknames are things only people who are friends use.

Yozora and I, that is, "Sora" and "Taka", *were* best friends.

However, "Yozora Mikadzuki" and "Kodaka Hasegawa" are not.

That's obvious, and it merely reinforces the fact that I can't get back 10 years of lost time simply by realizing that Yozora is Sora.

While feeling a touch of sadness from that thought, I continued my hurried walk to the classroom.

The Neighbors Club's Reaction

Due to the fact that Saint Chronica Academy runs on a semester system, normal classes started today, the first day after summer break.

Which means all clubs resumed their activities as well.

After a short homeroom at the end of the day, Yozora and I began our walk to the clubroom.

"By the way, Yozora, when did you, umm... realize that I was 'Taka'?"

I timidly brought up the subject to Yozora while we walked together.

"From the start," answered Yozora, without a hint of hesitation.

"From the start?"

"I knew it was you the second you transferred in."

"Wow..."

I know that I look a lot different than I used to 10 years ago.

"Hmph, it's impossible to not recognize that pudding hair of yours."

"...Now I get it."

That makes a lot of sense.

I guess this blond hair I only half inherited from my mother can be useful once in a while after all.

"Wait, huh? I thought you said that you didn't remember my name the first time we talked after I transferred here?"

That evening, a month after I had transferred to this school in the middle of May.

I ran into Yozora talking to her air friend by chance, which began our busy days with the Neighbors Club.

"...Because it was annoying that I was the only one who noticed."

Yozora said, while pouting.

"So that's why you pretended you didn't know..."

"That's right."

"Well, sorry about that... But still, how was I supposed to realize it in the first place? I always thought that you were... a-a guy."

"Mu..." said Yozora, stumbling over what to say.

"B-but I never once said that I was a guy."

"Who would think that somebody who dresses like a guy, talks like a guy, and gets into fights all the time is a girl?"

"Muuu..."

Yozora stopped and looked like she was sulking after hearing me say that.

"...You're the one who left before I could tell you I was a girl."

Yozora mumbled in a lonely voice.

It was then that I realized something.

"Wait, so you mean that the 'something important' you had to tell me was..."

"....."

Yozora nodded in silence.

The last day that Yozora and I, that Sora and Taka met.

We both parted, telling each other we had "something important" to say tomorrow.

For me, that "something important" was that I had to move because of my father's work.

"No, wait, hold on. You're the one... who never showed up..."

I waited for hours in the park we promised to meet at, but Sora never showed up.

Thus, I left town without being able to say a single thing to Sora .

"That was..."

Yozora made an uncomfortable look on her face after hearing me point that out.

"That was because... umm... well... because..."

Yozora's face went a deep shade of red as she shot me a glare and said,

"It was embarrassing! I-I was embarrassed to... wear a s-skirt in front of you!"

I stood there stunned, not sure what exactly was going on.

"Huh- A skirt?"

Yozora puffed her cheeks out like she was pouting.

"That's what I said! I wore girly clothes so that I could tell you that I was actually a girl! But I'd never worn a skirt before, so I was worried that it might not look good on me, and about how breezy it felt between my legs, and I thought you might laugh at me, or even worse, tell me that I looked disgusting or something, so I...!"

Small tears began to form in the corners of Yozora's eyes.

"...I did get close to the park, but I just couldn't walk up to you. I bet I could've worked up the courage if I knew you were moving, though..."

Yozora quickly moved to wipe her tears and said,

"The point is, it's all your fault!"

"Why is it my fault!?"

I yelled back reflexively.

Sure, I was acting like a big wimp not being able to tell her I was moving, but... I don't think Yozora was much better.

"Muu..."

"....."

We stared at each other in silence for a while.

Before long, one of us looked away from the other.

"...Anyway, it's in the past now."

Yozora said, a faint smile rising to her face.

"...Yeah, that's right."

I gave a small nod in response.

It ended up being a sad farewell, but now we're together again.

I don't think there's anything bad about that.

"You know, going out of your way to wear girly clothes to tell me you were a girl is... how to put it... p-pretty cute of you actually ."

I said while feeling embarrassed, causing Yozora's face to blush a little.

"Hmph, I just thought you wouldn't believe me if all I did was tell you I was a girl, because you were so dense you didn't notice, even though we spent so much time playing together."

Yozora quickly snapped back.

...Well, she does have a point, I might not have believed her back then if all she did was say she was a girl.

And if it ended up with me telling her, "Then show me some proof that you're a girl,"... No, let's not even imagine that...

"? Were you thinking about me just now?"

"N-no!"

"...Well whatever."

Thus, we resumed our walk to the clubroom.

As we did,

"Oh yeah, Kodaka, keep the fact that we were frien-... knew each other when we were little a secret from the rest of the Neighbors Club."

I didn't expect her to say that.

"A secret? Why?"

"No real reason, but it's not something to go telling everyone about, right?"

Yozora had a sour look on her face when I asked her why.

"...Well, that's fine with me."

I agree that I don't think it's something to go telling everyone about, but I don't think we need to hide it either.

"Good, as long as you understand. Let's go."

Yozora said, grabbing my hand and taking off at a faster pace than before.

"Eh, wai- Why are you in such a rush?"

"I'm not going that fast."

"? ? ?"

Yozora dragged me, by my hand, out of the school, onto the stone pavement, and at last, into the chapel.

The chapel's Lounge #4.

The place where the Neighbors Club Yozora and I belong to holds its activities.

The Neighbors Club, a club with the goal of "making friends".

When we reached the front of the clubroom, Yozora casually let go of my hand.

I'm guessing it was because we walked so fast, but Yozora's face was a little red.

We opened the door, and walked into the clubroom.

"Hey guys."

Three members were already in the clubroom, Sena Kashiwazaki, Rika Shiguma, and Yukimura Kusunoki.

Sena was playing a hand held game, Rika was doing something on her laptop, and Yukimura was standing there spacing out.

"Ah, Kodaka-senpai, hel-... lo... oooofhwaaaaa!?"

As Rika lifted her head to say hi to me, she let out a strange yell all of a sudden.

She was looking behind me, that is to say, at Yozora, who entered along with me.

I can't really blame her.

Anybody'd be surprised to see that Yozora just lopped off most of her hair... is what I thought, but,

"Omgggggggg Kodaka-senpai and a mysterious pretty boy!!"

Rika yelled, after jumping out of her chair and making some weird victory pose.

"Huh? Sexy boy?"

I asked, puzzled, to which Rika responded by sliming her way over to me with bloodshot eyes and a crazed smile on her face.

"W-w-w-w-w-who is that devilishly sexy boy with you, Senpai!? Ah, no, actually, wait, don't tell me, Rika will figure it out on her own! He's Kodaka-senpai's junior He's Kodaka-senpai's classmate He's Kodaka-senpai's senior He's Kodaka-senpai's teacher (Rika hopes he's a science teacher) He's Kodaka-senpai's childhood friend He's Kodaka-senpai's little brother (Rika hopes he's a twin) He's Kodaka-senpai's older brother (Rika hopes he's a twin) He's Kodaka-senpai's fiancé He's Kodaka-senpai's Student Council President He's Kodaka-senpai's soccer team rival!"

Rika spat out a bunch of incomprehensible nonsense.

She was going completely nuts, her breathing was getting wild, and I guess the only part of Yozora she saw was her face.

I can certainly see how you could mistake Yozora's face for that of an androgynous pretty boy, but I mean, come on, she's wearing a skirt.

And if she thought she was a boy, then what's the deal with ?

...Well, would be the correct answer, I guess.

Although... isn't wrong either.

"*Drool*..."

Rika wiped the drool from her mouth with the palm of her hand.

"Gyoehfufu... I wonder who's the top and who's the bottom... Senpai could be a strong top, a clumsy bottom, a clumsy top, a seductive bottom, a rough bottom, a rough top... Kodaka-senpai, you're amazing, anything fits you... Just by imagining it, Rika is... Rika is... hau...!"

Rika collapsed on the floor with an expression of pure ecstasy on her face.

I didn't get a word of what she just said, but I can tell it's something I wouldn't want to get either.

"...Damn pervert."

Yozora made a face that looked disgusted from the bottom of her heart.

"Sheesh, she's so..."

I sighed, and ended up looking over at Yukimura after removing my gaze from Rika.

"...A-Aniki, and... a sexy boy...?"

Yukimura was looking at me nearly in tears.

He quietly whispered in a quivering voice,

"...At what point did this occur... Am I, no longer needed by Aniki...?"

He's over here having his own brand of annoying delusions.

"Calm down you guys, this is Yozo-"

"Huh? Yozora, you cut your hair?"

Sena said with a surprised look, after setting her game down on the table.

"Hmph, it's as you can see, Meat."

Yozora answered, taking a step forward while twirling a finger in the back of her hair.

"Hmmmm..."

Sena stared at Yozora's face for a while before saying,

"Wow, you really chopped a ton off. How come?"

"...It has nothing to do with you."

Yozora maintained her cold attitude in contrast to Sena, who was clearly enjoying herself.

"Ehh, come on, just tell me, it's not that big of a deal!"

"You're right, but it would still increase my useless conversations coefficient."

"Useless conversations coefficient?"

"It's a theory the sociologist Clay Lupnis came up with, and is basically like Engel's coefficient, except for conversations. It shows the percentage of conversations one has with Meat in a month, and the higher it is the farther one gets from being a normal."

"How does talking to me push you farther away from being normal!?"

Yozora said nothing in response and quickly turned her back to Sena.

"Hey! Answer me!"

"Stop it, don't talk to me! I already don't get to talk to many people as it is! You talking to me is only pushing it up higher and higher, which in turn pushes me farther and farther away from being a normal!"

Yozora covered her ears, refusing to talk, causing Sena to groan "Uuuu~" in frustration. Soon after, though, she quickly forced a smile and said,

"Heh heh, so what, did some guy break your heart or something ?"

"......!"

Yozora's face clouded over in an instant after hearing Sena's words.

Eh, why?

"Kh... Meat..."

Yozora groaned as if to confirm the validity of Sena's claim.

"Ah, I was right!? You really have a broken heart!? Ahahaha, iiiiiidiot!"

"You damn little..."

Sena was honestly laughing full of pleasure, but Yozora was glaring at her with a look of pure hatred.

"Iiidiot, iiidiot, Yozora got rejected~! So lame!"

"...Being able to pour salt in the wounds of someone who just had her heart broken is amazing in a certain sense... Even Rika, who's known for not being able to read the atmosphere whatsoever, would have a hard time going that far..."

"Sena-anego is ruthless."

Commented Rika and Yukimura, who've recovered from their shock now, I suppose.

That's Sena for you, only she could weird out our two weirdo juniors.

"So, who's the guy who rejected you? He must have pretty good eyes to be able to see what a piece of crap you are. I might even let him be my servant. All guys are destined to kneel before me after all!"

SMACK!

Yozora smacked Sena across the head at full force with her flyswatter before I even noticed she grabbed it.

"~~~! What'd you do that for, stupid Yozora!"

Yozora stared at Sena, who was half in tears, with a look cold enough to freeze water.

"Sorry to inform you, but I do not have a broken heart... However, I now know full well how you'll react any time I'm feeling down."

"What the heck... I thought this was my chance to finally tease you instead..."

Sena seemed to be really upset about it.

"You truly are the worst piece of rotten meat in the world."

"Who cares about a little broken heart anyway! Besides, I'm always the one doing the rejecting anyway! How am I supposed to know how someone feels when they get rejected!?"

Sena spat out that line like it was nothing, but it made me wonder if this is the reason why all the other girls hate her.

"Anyway, if it wasn't a broken heart, then why did you cut it?"

"I'm not telling you."

"Come on, tell me~!"

Sena kept pressing her for an answer, but all Yozora did was turn her back and ignore her.

"Ah, I know!"

Rika yelled all of a sudden.

"W-wait here for a little bit, ok!?"

Rika said before bolting out of the clubroom.

"......?"

I thought about what she was up to while I waited, but she came back before long.

She must've sprinted, because she was panting really heavily.

She was holding some kind of clothes in her hands.

She slowly walked over to Yozora and said,

"S-senpai, please wear this...!"

"What is it?"

Yozora spread out the clothes Rika gave her while wearing a puzzled expression.

It was a white gakuran that had gold threads stitched onto it here and there.

Obviously, it's not our school's uniform.

"Some school's boys' uniform...?"

"That's right Yozora-senpai! That's Teiritsu Galford Academy's white gakuran, passed down from one generation of Student Council President to the next!" Rika said, excitedly.

"T-teiritsu? Gal...? Where is that... Actually, why do you even have this Teiritsu Gal-whatever place's uniform anyway?"

"I got it from a co-worker at a game company. It's a little too big for Rika, but I'm sure it'd fit you perfectly Yozora-senpai!"

"Game company... So this is made for cosplay!? Why should I wear your cosplay outfit!?"

"Because it'll look good on you! It'll definitely look good on you! "

"Muu..."

Yozora stared at the Teiritsu Gal-whatever white gakuran after being pressured by Rika and her bloodshot eyes.

"You're the only one who can wear this, Yozora-senpai! It'll deeeeefinitely look good on you! Pllleeeaaaaaaaase!"

"Muu... I'm only doing this once, got it?"

Yozora said, reluctantly, to which Rika's face exploded into a smile.

"Yahhooooo! Thank you very much, Senpai! Now come on, let's get you changed! Come on, strip! Strip!"

"Uwa, knock it off, idiot!"

Yozora tore away from Rika, who went to take her clothes off all of a sudden.

"Kodaka, look over that way!"

"!"

I turned my back to Yozora in a panic.

"Kufufu, now then, Yozora-senpai, let's get those clothes off you ~♥"

"Don't touch me, you pervert!"

My heart skipped a beat as I heard the sound of Yozora undoing her tie.

Uwa... Yozora's really getting naked...

...Maybe I should've just left the room altogether.

As I was thinking that, the sound of Yozora taking off her clothes got louder.

"Ohh~! Yozora-senpai, that's such a sexy way to strip! You even took your panties off in one fell swoop!"

"Bft!"

I accidentally let some spit out, and Yozora started yelling in a flustered voice.

"D-don't listen to her, Kodaka! I'm still wearing them!"

"O-ok!"

God damn Rika and her crazy perverted side...

"Hey you... if you pull something like that again I'm not going to wear this..."

"It was just a joke~"

Yozora's voice was full of anger, in contrast to Rika's happy one.

The sound of clothes rubbing against Yozora's body as she changed continued for a short while after, until...

"Kodaka, you can turn around now."

I let out a big sigh after hearing her tell me that.

They're finally done... That felt like it took forever...

Feeling relieved, I turned around, and was greeted by a pretty, young, girlish-looking boy clothed in a white gakuran facing me.

Of course, that pretty boy was just Yozora, but... Those guy's clothes looked stupidly good on her, and even if you knew it was Yozora you'd still have a hard time believing it.

"...D-does it look good on me?"

Yozora asked me with her cheeks blushing.

"Y-yeah..." I said as I nodded in response,

"

YEEEEEESSSSSSSSSSSS
!!"

Rika's eyes bugged out as she let out a strange yell that sounded like some kind of weird bird before falling flat on her back.

"S-seriously. what the hell is wrong with you!?"

Yozora took a step back from Rika with a somewhat scared look on her face.

"Hmm... Y-you don't look too bad in that."

Sena said, while blushing for reasons unknown to me.

"The handsome man who came in with Aniki was Yozora-anego , and Yozora-anego is a handsome man, and... I fear that I no longer understand what is happening..."

Yukimura said, with his eyes full of confusion.

You're the hardest thing to understand here...

"...Do I really look good in it?"

Yozora mumbled, as she walked over to the full-length mirror in the back of the clubroom.

She stood there, staring at herself in the mirror for a while, before letting out a "Wow..." mixed with a sigh.

Looks like even she thinks she looks good in it.

"Yozora-senpai! Please line-up with Kodaka-senpai!"

Rika screamed, breathing wildly after having recovered from her shock yet again.

"......?"

Yozora wore a puzzled expression, but walked over to me nonetheless.

"Is this ok?"

Uwa... She looks even better in that guy's uniform up close...

"IT'S HEREEEEEE ——(゜≡(≡)≡————!! My Student Council President and yankee line-up IS HEREEEEE ————()()()()()()————————"

"Who're you calling a yankee!?" "Who're you calling a Student Council President!?"

Yozora and I both yelled at Rika, who let out an odd scream of joy.

However, she didn't seem to hear us, and continued with her typical wild breathing and bloodshot eyes.

"Haa haa... I-I can't take this... This is just way too much...! President!"

"N-now what do you want!?"

"Please look at Kodaka-senpai and tell him 'Quit smoking!' as if you were warning him!"

"Haa?"

Yozora tilted her head in confusion, but faced me anyway and said,

"...Quit smoking, Kodaka."

"I don't smoke in the first place!"

I yelled back, having remembered a time when people really did suspect me of smoking.

"No no Kodaka-senpai! That's where you go 'Wha' wuzzat? Piss off.' while grabbing the president's collar! Muhaaaa!"

"Like I give a damn!"

Yozora then quietly whispered to me with a tired look on her face.

"Let's just go along with her until she shuts up... That's probably easiest."

"You're actually really weak against Rika, aren't you?"

Yozora pursed her lips after having me point it out, and said,

"How am I supposed to deal with someone who I can't use insults or direct attacks against?"

Looks like even the all-mighty Yozora has people she can't handle.

Anyway, I agreed with what Yozora said, so we decided to just go along with what Rika wanted.

"Umm... What was that? Piss off. There, happy?"

I said, while grabbing Yozora's collar. After which, Yozora shot a glare back at me and said,

"You little... do you know who you're talking to...?" in an even deeper voice than usual while grabbing my collar in response.

"Ehh!?"

Yozora had so much force to her words that I accidentally let go of her collar.

I can't believe she managed to scare me like that even though I've had to deal with real delinquents plenty of times before...

"Woops, my hand leapt out on its own there," said Yozora.

"...Are you sure you've never done this before?"

"What wuzzat?"

Yozora put more strength into the hand grabbing me.

"Guoh!?"

C-can't breathe...

However, it looks like that was exactly what Rika was looking for.

"Muhhaaaaaaa! N-nice work, Yozora-senpai! That's a perfect imitation of a hard S president! Kodaka-senpai, your clumsy yankee act is godlike toooo! Haa haa... T-this is so good you two! Ok, now, Yozora-senpai, keep going, and bring your face closer to Kodaka-senpai's!"

"Nn..."

Yozora brought her face closer to mine, still grabbing my collar.

I could feel my face getting hotter as that incredibly good-looking gender neutral face closed in on me.

"Haa haa... Seeing a clumsy yankee getting attacked by a hard S Student Council President is just so... Okay, Yozora-senpai, now say 'You belong to me.' to him!"

"Wha...!?"

After hesitating for a short while, Yozora awkwardly looked away from me and said...

"Y-you belong... to me..."

"

UNIVERRRSSSSSSSSSSEI!!"

Thump.

I'm guessing Rika hit her climax there, because she fell to the ground, face up.

She was twitching with a smile plastered on her face, and there were even tears of joy in her eyes.

She's so hopeless...

"...Anyway, I guess she's satisfied," I said with a sigh.

"So, can you let go of me now? It's hard to breathe."

"! Y-yeah."

Yozora, who was still grabbing me, let go of me in a hurry after hearing what I said.

"Muu..."

"...Aniki... Anego..."

Sena and Yukimura were looking at us with a upset looks in their eyes, for some reason.

"Hmph... Guess I'll change, now that the pervert is quiet..."

Yozora said, with a vaguely triumphant smile.

However, as she did,

The door flew open and a silver-haired little girl in a nun's outfit came flying in.

It was Maria Takayama, the Neighbors Club's advisor.

"Onii-chan! Ahaha! Onii-chan, Onii-chan!"

Maria quickly found me, and then ran over to hug me.

"Hey. Full of energy today, I see."

Maria let out a happy sounding "Ehehe..." as I rubbed her head.

"Hey, hey, Onii-chan, did you know!? Today is-"

Maria raised her head, and was about to say something, but cut herself off mid-sentence.

She took a good look at Yozora standing next to me, before saying, with a panic-stricken look on her face,

"A... a pretty boy...! There's a super pretty boy in here...!"

She hid behind my back and started shaking like a leaf.

I agree that Yozora looks exactly like a pretty boy in that guy's uniform, but...

"Why're you acting all scared?"

I asked, since I thought it was weird she reacted to this the same way she did to Yozora in her horse mask a few days ago.

Maria answered, while shaking,

"Don't you know, Onii-chan!? Pretty boys are super scary! Pretty boys eat every single cute girl they see! That's what the other sisters said! I'm really cute, so I have to be extra careful!"

...I've got a feeling they meant a different kind of "eat".

"Ahaha, Onii-chan you're not a pretty boy so I can relax around you!"

".....Oh. Is that so."

"Yeah! I'm really happy you're not a pretty boy Onii-chan! Onii-chan is my savior! I love you for **not being pretty at all**, Onii-chan!"

Maria hugged me tightly with a smile full of trust in me.

...Why do I feel like bursting into tears right now... I don't think I'm a pretty boy either, but... Having those pure eyes completely deny it hurts my heart far more than any insult ever would...

"...Pft-"

Yozora let out a stifled laugh all of a sudden.

She then said, while drawing closer to Maria,

"I, pretty boy. I, you, devour.[1]"

"Gyahhhhhhh!?

It didn't sound like something a pretty boy would say at all, but I guess it worked perfectly on Maria, since she ran away screaming from Yozora.

"Uwahhhh! Stay away! Stay away pretty boy!"

"You go crunch crunch as I devour you..."

"I taste bad! Don't eat me, I taste bad!"

Maria kept running away and hid behind Sena.

"Sena would taste way better than me! She's pretty *and* has huge boobs!"

"What kind of nun tries to sacrifice others to save herself..."

Sena said with a look of disdain in her eyes.

"I... hate fatty women. I like healthy ones."

"What's that supposed to mean!?"

Yozora ignored Sena's outburst.

"Uuu~! You damn pretty boy with really long, slim legs you got from careful dieting! You'd still be cool even if you got a little bit fatter!"

Maria insulted(?) Yozora while moving over to Yukimura this time.

"What about Yukimura!? I'm sure he tastes good!"

"...No, that's, how to put it... wrong."

Yozora said, with a slightly troubled look on her face.

"Uwahhhh! Pretty boys are scary! ...Ah!"

Maria, half in tears, spotted Rika, who was still passed out on the floor with a look of pure ecstasy on her face, and ran over to her.

"How about this one!? She's a girl, isn't fatty, and is healthy too! "

Yozora slowly shook her head, and then said with a serious look on her face.

"Unfortunately, that one is... rotten..."

"Gyahhh! She issss!?"

"I guess I'll eat you after all... I'll eat the little girl!"

Yozora closed in on Maria.

"Nnnnnnnooooooooooo!!"

Maria ran out of the clubroom with a giant scream.

"Go explode, you stupid pretty boy!!"

Slam!

The door closed, and Yozora stopped walking as she wiped the sweat off her forehead with a "Phew..."

"Aha-"

An unexpectedly tender smile rose on her pretty boy face.

"Teasing a stupid kid like her after all this time sure feels great!"

...If you ignore that awful statement she just made, that smile of hers was charming enough to captivate anyone, boy or girl.

"Sheesh... Yozora's still Yozora, even with the new haircut."

Sena said, with a half-surprised look on her face.

It felt like there was a hint of relief hidden in that voice of hers just now.

...Now that I think about it, the only one of us who still recognized Yozora after getting her hair cut was Sena, wasn't it?

References

1. ↑ **オ**: A line often uttered by demons in the Shin Megami Tensei series

Summer Homework

Continuing on, it was around 7 p.m. on September first.

When I got home from club, I noticed Kobato's shoes in the entryway.

Kobato didn't come to club today.

Kobato goes to Saint Chronica Academy's middle school section , but she's still a member of the Neighbors Club.

Both the middle and high school sections work on a semester system, and I thought she'd show up at club after class like usual, but...

I went inside, wondering why she wouldn't show up.

Kobato wasn't in the kitchen or living room, and the lights weren't on either.

When I went to see if she was upstairs, I saw that there was some light coming out of Kobato's room.

Guess she's doing something in her room then.

I decided to let her be for now, and called her down after I finished dinner.

"Kobato, dinner's ready~"

...No answer.

"Kobato, time for dinner~"

Still no signs of Kobato coming out of her room.

"...Is she asleep?"

I went up the stairs, and opened the door to Kobato's room to see what was going on.

Kobato was sitting at her desk.

"Kobato, dinner's ready."

"Hyawah!?"

I called out to Kobato, causing her to twitch before quickly laying over her desk like she was hiding something.

"Kobato?"

"K-Kukuku... W-what business might you have with me, my fellow clansman...?"

Kobato turned her head around to face me.

"I said dinner's ready... What are you hiding?"

Kobato twitched as an obvious look of panic rose to her face and said,

"Ku... Kukuku... It would be pointless to try explaining to someone such as yourself... The darkness hidden beneath my facade... is something you would be unable to comprehend..."

"Uh-huh. Well, whatever... Come on, let's eat."

I turned my back to Kobato.

"Kukuku... So tonight's blood covered feast is about to begin I see..."

Kobato got up out of her chair and walked over to me while talking about some nonsense.

That's when I did a quick 180, and slipped by Kobato, making a dash for her desk.

"A-an-chan!?"

Kobato screamed.

...But I mean, come on, it's probably just one of her crazy made-up stories, and anybody would want to see what it was after seeing her obvious attempt to hide it...

"Ummm..."

What I found open on her desk, was a textbook and a notebook.

The textbook had rows of math problems lined up neatly, and the notebook had Kobato's answers written in it.

"What... you were just studying?"

"Uuu~ An-chan you big meanie..."

Kobato's eyes got a little watery.

"S-sorry. You didn't have to hide it though, studying like you're supposed to is a good thing."

I gave Kobato a pat on the head, and she awkwardly averted her eyes before saying,

"H-hmph... a noble of the exalted night such as myself has no need for studying... I merely opened that book on a whim for my amusement..."

"Yeah yeah. Let's leave it at that."

Thus, Kobato and I went downstairs and ate dinner.

That night.

After washing the dishes and finishing my homework, I took a bath, then spent some time reading and playing video games before hopping in bed a little after midnight.

It was right when I turned off the lights and went to go to sleep that it happened.

My door opened with a creaking noise, and when I looked over at it I saw it was Kobato who came in, looking like she was about to burst into tears.

"...Sniff... An-chan..."

"What's wrong?"

I asked Kobato, after turning the lights back on.

Kobato's face contorted slightly with her sniffling before answering my question.

"...An-chan... Help me with my homework..."

I could see she was holding a sheet of math problems in her right hand.

"Haha, sure, of course I'll help. What part don't you understand ?"

I gently said to Kobato, proud of her for trying so hard to get her homework done.

"...And so, I respectfully request the aid of my fellow Neighbors Club members to come to the aid of my foolish little sister..."

The next day after school.

I brought Kobato to the clubroom with me, and deeply bowed my head before the rest of the club members, who were all already there, after explaining the situation.

"Come on, you ask them too."

Kobato wore a composed expression as she said,

"Ku, ku, ku... Oh ignorant children of man... You should be grateful to be of service to the Queen of the Noble Darkness..."

I gave Kobato a little smack on the head.

"Uuu~"

Kobato bowed her head with tears in her eyes.

About Kobato's math homework I helped her with last night.

That was indeed school homework, but it was also her **summer homework**.

And on top of that, it wasn't just her math homework that wasn't finished; she'd barely even touched the rest of it as well.

During summer break all I saw her do was laze around at home or do club stuff with us, so I asked her once "You ok with your summer homework and stuff?" to which she responded in her usual tone, "Kukuku... It is but a trivial matter for one who has

lived through the eons such as me..." However, despite what she said... things were clearly not ok.

Of course, summer homework is something you're supposed to do yourself, but the deadline to turn it in here is by the end of the first week of school after break ends.

If you don't turn it in on time, your grades take a huge hit, and if they get bad enough it's even possible to be expelled.

I've heard you can make it up on the finals, but unfortunately for Kobato, her grades aren't all that great compared to the average at Saint Chronica Academy. I bet that if the chairman, Pegasus Kashiwazaki, wasn't our dad's old friend, she would've failed the entrance exams.

Consequently, we have to make sure she turns this summer homework in on time.

However, Saint Chronica gives out more homework than most schools do, and it's unlikely she'd finish it in the five days she has left, even with my help.

"...Usually you'd probably just copy off your friends in this situation, but..."

I casually mentioned, which led to the rest of the club members' faces clouding over.

None of us have any friends, including Kobato.

"So we're the only ones you can rely on, is that it?"

"Yeah..."

I nodded at Yozora's simplification.

"Sheesh... I wanted to believe that there was no way my little sister could be this irresponsible..."

"Uu~... I'm sorry An-chan..."

Kobato apologized, hanging her head.

"Ahaha! You got yelled at! The vampire got yelled at! The vampire got yelled at by Onii-chan for not doing her homework! Ahahaha!"

Maria let out a series of ridiculously happy sounding laughs.

"Ughhh...!!"

Kobato groaned in frustration, but she must've at least understood what she did was wrong, because she didn't attack Maria like usual.

"Ah~n, gloomy Kobato-chan is so C~U~T~E~♥ Ok, *the* Sena Kashiwazaki is going help you out, Kobato-chan!"

Sena was the first to offer her help, grinning all the while.

"Thanks!"

When I gave Sena my thanks, she blushed a little for some reason.

"I-it's not like I'm doing it for you, Kodaka! This is all for Kobato-chan!"

"Well yeah, of course. Kobato's the one who needs help after all."

"T-that's right..."

.....?

I don't really get it, but whatever.

Rika was the next to open her mouth.

"Kufufu, seems as though the time for Rika to show her genius level intellect has finally arrived."

"Well, I don't really think we need a genius to help with middle school level homework, but thanks, I appreciate the help."

"Just leave it to me, Senpai!"

The genius inventor girl cheerfully smiled. She's a pervert, but it looks like she'll be useful this time.

"I would throw away my very life were it for Aniki's little sister."

Looks like Yukimura's gonna help out too.

"Hmph, I'll help too then."

Even Yozora agreed to help, albeit with a look of annoyance on her face.

That just leaves...

"Ahaha, doing homework with my smarts is a piece of cake!"

Maria happily laughed.

"Cool, I'm counting on you, Maria."

"Ok!"

I patted Maria on the head, and she nodded with a big smile on her face.

Kobato made an upset face when she saw me do that.

"Uggghhhh...!!"

"Ahaha! You better thank me, stupid vampire! I'm doing an idiot like you a special favor and lending you my smarts!"

"Like I'd ever thank you moronnn!"

Kobato yelled at Maria.

"W-what was that!?"

"I don't need your help!"

"What!? Beg me to help you right now!"

"I'd never beg you, moronnn!"

"Whoever calls people a moron is the real moron, stupid poop vampire! Nevermind, I'll beat you to a pulp instead!"

"Kukuku... We'll see who beats who..."

Maria ran over at Kobato with her cross in hand, and the two started fighting.

So this is how it ends up with these two.

"Say you want me to help with your homework! Beg me to help! "

"I won't! If you want to help so badly then *you* beg *me*!"

"W-why should I have to beg you!?"

"'Cause we never needed you in the first place!"

"That's impossible! I'm super smart and can help out a lot!"

"Liar!"

"I-I'm not a liar! I'm really good at studying! You'd be amazed at how good I am!"

"Then beg to help out! ...If you do, I'll let you help!"

"Ugahh! I beg you, please let me do your homework!"

Maria yelled and made a bow full of vigor.

"Hmph... fine, you can do some."

"Yay~! I did it~! Yay~! Yay~!"

Kobato reluctantly nodded, and Maria jumped around the room like she was doing some comedy act.

And so, their little fight ended.

"...T-to think she could turn that situation into making her opponent beg instead... Your little sister is quite the conversationalist..."

Yozora looked like she was truly astonished.

"I really doubt she intended to do that from the start..."

I think looking for logic in their conversation is just asking for a headache.

"Actually, aside from that, I didn't expect you of all people to help out, Yozora."

"? What do you mean?"

Yozora made a puzzled look on her face.

"Well, you know, the actual act of you helping someone is pretty surprising..."

Yozora made a frown at that one.

"Hmph, it's not like doing some middle schooler's homework will take much work. Besides..."

"Besides what?"

"There was one time I forgot to do my homework over winter break in middle school too. I didn't have any friends to copy off of, so I got yelled at in front of the rest of the class by our teacher. The humiliation... the pain of it... You probably have to experience it to understand it..."

Yozora said, looking off into the distance.

I guess this is a touchy subject for her.

"Aha, you're such a moron, forgetting your homework! I've never been yelled at for forgetting to do my homework!"

"Oh, is that so? Good for you."

Sena attempted to start something with Yozora, but she just brushed it off.

"Ghh... What the heck... You could at least play along a little bit.."

Yozora glanced back at Sena, who was groaning for some reason, and said,

"Ok, let's get started on helping Kodaka's little sister avoid that horrible humiliation."

After this and that, the entire Neighbors Club gathered up, and began working on Kobato's summer homework.

The things Kobato had to do were sets of problems and handouts from each subject, a reading reflection assignment, and a summer diary.

I think it's pretty weird to still have to do a diary in middle school, but I guess they're trying to get the students to think about themselves by writing down their actions.

She hardly touched any of it, except for the diary that she kept up with each day.

Which would be great, but the stuff she wrote is...

Month VII, Day IV. Weather: A dark night cold enough to freeze one's heart.

Today I set off for my homeland, the demon realm... I watched a DVD I rented... I do think that Gernica-chan's outfit in Kuroneku season three is cute, but I believe her season two one was cuter...

To put it simply, it was her usual babble.

"Kobato... When did you go to the demon realm again?"

"Kukuku... That was quite the pleasant journey..."

"You were just lazing around the house most of July. The only time you left was to rent videos from TATSUYA."

"Kukuku... How foolish... For one of my power, it is but a simple task to astrally project myself and teleport to the demon realm..."

"Then do it right now."

I stared down at Kobato.

"Fueh?"

"Go on, go to the demon realm for a little bit."

"Kh..."

After showing a brief look of hesitance on her face,

"Kh... Kukuku... very well... Haaaaa..."

She closed her eyes, and folded her arms in the shape of a cross while taking a big breath.

But, she opened her eyes soon after.

"...Kh, that abominable God's barrier is stronger now... Breaking it wouldn't take more than a few hours, but I suppose now is not the time for that, kukuku..."

"You got that right. You better get to work on *your* summer homework! Let's see, 'Today I defeated the holy angel Lucifarael who dared trespass on my domain, and offered her head to my clansman.'..... Wasn't this the day we all went to the pool?"

"It happened after we left the pool..."

"Oh really?"

"Yeah."

Thump.

I lightly hit Kobato on the head with her diary.

"Redo the whole thing."

"Fueh?"

Kobato's eyes went wide.

"You can't turn this in! Use that brain of yours to remember what *really* happened, and write that and only that down."

"Uuu~"

Kobato looked upset as she groaned, but she still took the diary from me and reluctantly began to erase her delusions.

That diary is the one thing she has to do herself... She needs to consider her own actions more than study anyway.

The rest of the Neighbors Club was already working on the other parts of her homework.

They weren't writing directly on the handouts, since it'd be a dead giveaway Kobato didn't do it, and were instead writing on separate sheets of paper for Kobato to copy later.

I decided to go with English for now since I'm good at it, and went to look at the questions.

They were mostly English to Japanese translations, but it looked easy enough to finish quickly, so I went to see how the rest of the club members were doing.

"Hmm~ Hmhm~♪"

Maria was busy solving math problems as she hummed a song.

She was working on the problem sheet Kobato was having trouble with last night, but she seemed to be breezing through it, writing the answers down on a separate sheet of paper.

I took a peek at Maria's answers from behind.

When I first saw the sheet I thought to myself, "Huh? Did I have to do stuff this hard in 8th grade...?" so it's understandable that Kobato would have trouble with it, but Maria was easily solving all of them.

And they were probably all right too.

I know that Yozora makes Maria do her homework for her, but this is the first time I've ever seen her in action.

"...Maria... You really are smart, aren't you..."

"Hmmm?"

I murmured my honest feelings, and Maria turned around with a puzzled look on her face.

"It's just, I was thinking how smart you must be to be able to solve all those so easily."

"Ahaha, Onii-chan your jokes are always so good! Even a dumb monkey can do this easy stuff!"

...It looks like she really believes that.

"Fghhh..." moaned Kobato (the great vampire who wasn't able to make a dent in the problems that apparently even a monkey can solve).

I didn't want to have to deal with them fighting again, so I patted Maria on the head and left her alone.

"I'm counting on you, Maria."

"Ok! Just for you Onii-chan, I won't stop halfway on these problems that are so easy I feel like I'm about to fall asleep! Fuahh...."

Maria kept on solving problems while yawning.

Next I went to check on Sena.

"....."

She was casually writing the answers to the science handout on a separate sheet of paper, and didn't really react to me.

...Hm? ...The **science** handout?

I looked over at Rika Shiguma, the lab-coat-wearing inventor girl.

I thought for sure Rika'd be the one to do this homework...

When I went to see what she was doing instead, I saw that it was Japanese homework.

...I've got a really bad feeling about this for some reason.

"H-hey... Rika, why are you doing Japanese?"

I asked, to which Rika turned around and answered,

"Because doing a middle schooler's science homework would be too boring. Besides, Rika hasn't ever taken any high school classes and stopped taking literature ones around middle school level, so she can probably give more natural answers."

"! I get it, natural answers huh?"

I didn't think of that.

It certainly makes sense that it'd be weird for someone with Kobato's grades to ace all her homework, and if she did she'd probably end up with her getting found out.

I better make sure to tell Kobato to add in some mistakes here and there when she copies Sena's and Maria's answers... I'll put some mistakes in on purpose too.

"That's a really good idea, thanks."

"Ehehe, hearing you say that makes me happy, Senpai."

Rika started acting shy after being praised by me.

This girl would seriously be cute if she wasn't a total pervert...

I took a peek at her answers to see how they looked.

The problems on the page Rika had open were the "Use XXX in a sentence." type problems.

I kept looking and glanced at her answers.

Question #1. Use "you shan't" in a sentence.

"Ahnn! S-stop it Senpai, Rika's, about to cummm!"

"Not yet, I won't let you cum yet! You shan't cum yet!"

"Are you retardeddddddddd!?"

I yelled with all my might.

"Eh? Why would you say that, Senpai?"

Rika asked with a confused look on her face.

It looks like she intended that to be a real answer.

"....."

Well, maybe they're not all like that.

Question #2. Use "by and large" in a sentence.

"Please stop, Aniki... I did not intend to..."

"So you say, but your body is much more honest... I only used a single finger, but just look at you."

"Ahh-!"

Yukimura's by and large delicate body resisted, but Kodaka forced him onto the bed and stole his lips.

"Don't push him onto the bed! Don't steal his lips! Why would you use 'by and large' in a sentence like that!? And why would you use Yukimura's and my name in it!? I want to yell at you for this so bad, but I feel like if I do I'll be the loser here so I won't say anything!"

"You're already talking, Senpai."

"Kh...!"

"Kodaka, can you be quiet?"

Sena coolly said, without even looking at me.

I just want to cry right now.

Question #3. Use "by all means" in a sentence.

Kodaka stuck his gigantic towering member deep into Rika.

"Khh... R-Rika, you're so wet, and warm..."

"Ahn... I'm so happy Senpai... By all means, please make me even wetter♥

"Why would you even use it in a sentence like that!?"

Rika tilted her head in confusion at me, standing there stupefied .

"Don't you use it a lot in sex scenes?"

"No! By all means you should apologize to 'by all means'!!"

"Oh Senpai... that's sexual harassment you know."

"It has nothing to do with what you think it does!"

"I see... that stinks. Still, Rika thinks it's important to fill in all the questions you see, even if you're not sure of the answer. You've got a 0% chance of being right if it's blank, so Rika always wants to bet on that 1% chance she might be right!"

Rika said, as if she was completely serious.

Well, I guess it is better than noth-

"Wait, no it's not! That sounded right for a second there, but this doesn't even have a 1% chance of being right! No Japanese Language question sheet is going to have you write out sex scenes! !"

"But what if one did..."

"It won't!!"

"Come on, Onii-chan! You have to be quiet when you study!" declared Maria.

"I-I'm sorry, Ms. Takayama..."

I can't believe I just got yelled at by Maria... I feel like my heart could shatter any moment now...

"...Haa... So, you know, you're always writing lots of short stories, and playing those novel-type games, right? The contents aside, shouldn't you have a pretty huge vocabulary after spending so much time on that stuff? How come these are so hard for you?"

"Hmm... Probably because Rika isn't really that good at learning the kind of things that they'd teach in an official language class~ But on the other hand, Rika is very good with innuendo, onomatopoeia, and sex terminology!"

"Onomatopoeia?"

"Like 'Hghhh!' and 'Kupaa' and stuff."[1]

"...Please, learn real Japanese."

"Hrmm... if you want me to, then please teach me sometime, Kodaka-senpai."

"Me? Well, I wouldn't really mind..."

"It's a promise then."

"Sure thing."

I nodded, and Rika made a little victory pose while murmuring "Yesss!" in a tiny voice.

I get the feeling I should've thought about making that promise a bit more, but... well, whatever.

I went to look at how Yozora was doing next.

Yozora chose to do the reading reflection assignment.

It's your typical reading assignment, where you pick a book from a list that the school gives you, read it, and then write a paper about what you thought about it. I'm pretty sure that this kind of homework is assigned at every school in the country, and that it's the one all students hate the most.

"So you took the one that's the biggest pain to do, huh..."

I said, thinking it was odd of her to do.

"It's because I've read one of the books that was on the list."

"Oh?"

Now that I think about it, Yozora *is* usually reading a book when we're in here.

She's always got a book cover on, so I never know what kind of book it is she's reading, but I guess she reads the "useful", for lack of a better word, kind of books that usually get put on those lists too.

"And besides, I'm fairly used to writing reflections and such."

Yozora said, with a hint of pride in her voice.

"You are? Seriously?"

That was something I'd never have guessed about her.

"Here, look."

Yozora handed me a single page of writing paper.

"Ehh!? You already wrote it!?"

"Yeah, but all I did was base it off of the reflection I wrote before , so I guess you could say I'm just recycling it. I'm fairly confident that it's well written though."

"Wow..."

I brought my eyes to the paper, impressed by Yozora.

A review of "The Voice From Heaven"

This book was recommended to me by a certain place, however it's a poorly written work with no real merit.

The characters all felt like they were just copies from other works I've read, and the setting of the story has no originality or sense of freshness to it.

The plot development was incredibly boring, and I was easily able to figure out how it would go after barely having read it.

I can't say that the writing was very good, and there were many parts where it was difficult to imagine what was even going on.

Honestly speaking, there are an innumerable number of books better than this one.

The paper used for the cover was nice though, so I guess if you see it at a used book store for 100 yen you could go for it.

Overall Score:

"What is this, an Amazones review!?"

"Ohh, that's quite an accurate critique there, Kodaka. But actually, it wasn't on Amazones. It was a review I wrote for a different online book store. I did it since they give you points if you write reviews about the things you buy."

"That's not the problem here!"

"Muu... Then what about this version instead?"

Yozora made an unsatisfied look on her face, and handed me a different sheet of writing paper.

A review of "The Voice From Heaven"

This book was recommended to me by a certain place, however it's was actually fairly interesting.

The characters all felt like they were just copies from other works I've read, but the overall setting and story had a good feel to them.

The plot development was pretty standard, but not once did I get bored reading it.

I can't say that the writing was great, but it wasn't bad either.

The paper used for the cover was nice too, so if this book caught your eye, then I think it'd be worth reading.

Overall Score:

"I thought it might not be the best idea to say a book recommended by the school was bad, so I went easier on it in this one. I really don't see myself being able to give it a higher score than this though."

"Why does that matter!?"

"Muu..."

Yozora sat in silence and thought for a while, and then raised her head as she thought of something.

"Ah, I get it! You're worried that this might be so good the school would submit it to a contest and win some kind of award, aren't you? That's a good point, we don't want that to happen..."

"Relax. I can assure you that has no chance of happening."

Yozora let out an upset groan.

"...Then what's the problem with it?"

"The problem...? Pretty much the whole thing."

"That's too vague, be more specific about it."

"You need to write an actual reflection, not a customer review!!"

"Mu... But still, this is a pretty handy template you know. You can use it on just about any novel by copy pasting and changing a few words. Also, FYI, there are 1 star and 5 star versions too. I made a killing in that site's points using this thing."

"...Is it really ok for you to do that?"

I asked, to which Yozora responded by averting her eyes uncomfortably.

"Hmm... I guess that might be why they deleted my account and all my points along with it..."

"So it wasn't ok at all!"

Yet another one of her pathetic episodes.

"Anyway, I'll have Kobato write the reflection herself, so go do the classical literature handout or something..."

"Hmph..."

Yozora made an unsatisfied face again, but obediently went and grabbed a different part of the homework to do.

I let out a long and deep sigh.

I figured that doing Kobato's homework would be easy, considering that most of the Neighbors Club are people who are only good at studying, but Yozora and Rika managed to completely disprove that theory. If you guys weren't good at studying, what else would you even have left?

Anyway... There's still one more person likely to mess things up here...

I nervously walked over to Yukimura.

By the way, Yukimura was in charge of the history handouts.

"How're you doing?"

"Ah, Aniki."

Yukimura responded with a tender smile that you could only see as that of a beautiful girl.

"Everything is going superbly, Aniki."

"Oh?"

Yukimura hand a few sheets of blank paper in front of him, and the Japanese history worksheets he was currently up against.

There were quite a few sheets of paper filled out with very clean handwriting, and the corresponding handouts for them sitting in a pile.

"Wow, you already finished this much of it?"

I looked at the answer sheets and the question sheets.

They were mostly questions from the Muromachi period to the Edo Period that had you answer stuff like "Who built XX?" and " What year did XX and XX fight each other?"

These questions are pretty much the same whether you're in middle or high school, aren't they... is what I thought to myself as I gave a once over to Yukimura's answers.

.....Yeah, umm... They're... probably right, I guess...?

Unlike with Math and Japanese, you can find all the answers for history questions on the net or in the textbook.

However, they probably anticipated people would try to answer the questions like that, so they made a ton of maniac level questions that I wasn't really sure on the answers to myself.

However, Yukimura was breezing through the sheets of paper, writing the answers to those hard questions, without so much as a single textbook or look of worry on his face.

"You're pretty amazing..."

"It is an honor to receive your compliments, Aniki."

Yukimura blushed (why?) after my complimenting him, and started to solve the problems even faster than before.

Right before my eyes was a stream of characters indicating people, places, buildings, and years things occurred being written down on his answer sheet.

"Wow..."

I was taken in by that captivating scene, and let out a voice full of admiration. He finished one handout, then another, and then a third——but after that Yukimura's hands stopped moving.

"......?"

I peeked over at the sheet, wondering why he stopped all of a sudden.

【World History Page 1

Question : What was the name of the Macedonian King who defeated the Persian army at the Battle of Gaugamela?

It looks like he hit the end of the Japanese history part, and hit the World history one. I guess it's because it's the first question, but this is a pretty easy one.

That's what I thought, but Yukimura was sitting there with even less of an expression than usual, just staring at the question with a empty look in his eyes.

"...Yukimura?"

"Ani...ki..."

I called out to him, and he started to sluggishly move his pen across the paper.

World History Page 1
Nobunaga Oda

"Hold it right there!!"

I yelled at Yukimura with all I had.

Yukimura looked over at me with a distressed look on his face.

"Why would you answer that with Nobunaga Oda!? It's obviously Alexander the Great or Alexander III!!"

I yelled, to which Yukimura responded by tilting his expressionless face in confusion and saying,

"Alexander, is it?"

"Yeah."

"So Alecksander was Lord Nobunaga...?"

"What are you talking about!?"

"I was just thinking that if it was Lord Nobunaga, he'd surely be able to best the Persian army."

"Well, yeah, I think he could pull it off too, but Nobunaga wasn't even born in 300 B.C."

"Is that so..."

Yukimura looked disappointed for some reason as he erased " Nobunaga Oda" and sloppily wrote "Alecksander" instead.

Then, he moved onto the second question.

Question : Who was the dictator inaugurated in 44 B.C. that ruled Rome for the rest of his life?"

"....."

Yukimura paused for a while, before finally writing an answer.

Nobunaga Oda

"Why would you write him again!? It's Caesar! Caesar!!"

"But Aniki, I'm sure that Lord Nobunaga would-"

"No. He. Would. Not. Nobunaga would not have built the foundations of the Roman Empire!"

"Is that so..."

Yukimura hung his head in disappointment, and wrote "Seezar"

"Hey... Are you by chance bad with world history?"

"As much as it shames me, it is true..."

And he was so good at Japanese history too. This guy always has to go to one extreme or the other, I swear.

"...Well, don't worry about it too much. I think that everybody has a subject or two they're not good at."

"Eh? I'm good at everything."

I ignored Sena's sudden intrusion.

"Yukimura, make sure you work hard on world history along with Japanese history from now on."

"Ok! I shall put forth my best effort!"

His reply was the only thing I had confidence in.

Anyway, that's more or less how everyone in the Neighbors Club worked on Kobato's homework together.

And by the end of club, we'd finished pretty much all the homework, aside from the reading reflection.

"Well, it was a lot of work, but we managed to finish it somehow."

I said to Kobato, on our bumpy train ride home.

"Yeah..."

Kobato gave a small nod.

"Make sure you say thanks to everyone, ok?"

"Ok..."

Kobato's cheeks blushed a little bit in embarrassment before saying,

"...Thanks, An-chan..."

With a pure, honest smile on her face.

The fact that just seeing that smile on her face made me want to let this whole summer homework thing slide is probably proof that I'm too soft as an older brother.

Translation Notes:

1. ↑ Kupaa is SFX for spreading a girl's labia.

The Tower

After school, in the Neighbors Club clubroom.

Yozora, Sena, Yukimura, Rika, and I were all killing time doing whatever we felt like, as usual.

Kobato was still busy copying down the answers to all the worksheets the rest of the Neighbors Club did for her, as well as writing her journal and the reading reflection, so she didn't come to the club today.

I think she wants to make sure it gets turned in on time, and not put any of the work everyone did for her to waste.

Yozora was reading a book next to me.

Maybe it's because she isn't used to the short hair yet, but she keeps fidgeting with her bangs and the hair on the back of her head too.

I also noticed that Sena, who was sitting on the sofa across from us, was staring at Yozora while holding her PSP in her hands.

"What're you spacing out for?" I asked Sena.

"Hmm... I was thinking I should change my hairstyle too."

She said while raising her silky blonde hair up into the air.

"Don't copy me, Meat."

Yozora said in an annoyed tone of voice after raising her head from her book.

"W-who said I was copying you? I just thought I'd change it since I've had this look for a while now!"

"Hmph..."

Yozora exhaled out her nose, and then, as if she just remembered something,

"Now that I think about it, I did get my hands on some interesting news regarding hairstyle recently. I'll be nice and tell you about it."

"Interesting news?"

Sena looked at Yozora with doubt in her eyes.

"It was written in this magazine I saw while I was at the hair salon. It said there's a new hairstyle called 'The Tower' that's popular with normal girls in the city."

"The Tower?"

Yozora's face cringed slightly upon having Sena ask about it.

"How should I explain it... Well, the main point is to, as the name suggests, give your hair a 'towering' amount of volume. Like , you stick your hair straight up, harden it with some spray, and then add curls or something. There's even some where the hair is so tall they put decorations on it."

"Oh? That sounds kinda interesting."

Rika took this chance to jump into the conversation.

"Ah, Rika knows about that too. Rika's seen pictures of 'The Tower' on the net. It's like an evolved form of the gorgeous hairstyles that nobles wore back in Medieval Europe. They've all got a very unique feeling to them."

"A noble!? That suits me perfectly!"

Sena looked like she was totally into it now.

"The really amazing ones can be styled into a bird cage with a real bird in it, or made to hold an antler's horns, or hang big decorations that say 'Love' and stuff."

"What? Are they trying to be generals from the Sengoku period...?"

Yukimura raised an eyebrow.

"Well, you could probably say that functionality aside, it *is* actually pretty similar to the pride and uniqueness the Sengoku generals displayed with their kabuto helmets."

Rika said, prompting a reply from Yukimura.

"Then do you mean to say this 'The Tower' hairstyle... serves the function of identifying oneself and one's social position after being captured and beheaded by the enemy?"

"No." "Wrong." "As if that's what it's for."

Yozora, Rika, and I all replied in unison, and Yukimura made a disappointed looking face.

"Hmm... I don't really get it, but it has a good vibe to it..." said Sena.

Yozora nodded.

"Yes, that's right. It's very difficult for a normal person to control such a towering hairstyle. It would be **exceedingly reckless** for **a commoner** to try and do it. They'd end up with so much hair all over, people wouldn't even be able to tell where the body was anymore. Sorry for getting your hopes up with something **completely beyond you**."

Sena twitched as her cheeks stiffened up.

"Anyway, if you want to change your hairstyle, **commoners** like to **typically** go to a **normal** hair salon and get their hair styled **normally**."

Sena's face twitched even more as Yozora went on, going out of her way to stress "normal" and such.

"Still, I wish that just once, I could see a real 'The Tower'..."

"Yeah~ But Rika thinks it'd be hard. We might've been able to make a good tower with all the hair you had before you cut it too, Yozora-senpai," said Rika.

"Haa... If only we had a pure blooded noble with a gorgeous aura powerful enough to overcome even the might of The Tower hairstyle..."

"Ahaha, you know we don't Yozora-senpai. Nobles like that only exist in anime and manga."

"I guess you're right."

...T-these two... what an obviously unnatural conversation...

However, we do indeed have someone here who that cheap provocation will work on.

Sena raised her voice.

"Hey, you two! You have a noble with a great aura right here! There's not a single person 'The Tower' fits in this world more than me!"

"Hahaha, don't push yourself, Meat."

Yozora said with a gentle smile on her face.

"She's right, Sena-senpai. 'The Tower' is an incredibly difficult hairstyle to wear. Shaping it into a tower is one thing, but looking good in it is..."

"How are we gonna know without even trying!? No, forget that, I already know! Make my hair into that 'The Tower' or whatever! I'll show you that no matter how flashy a hairstyle it is, that the

divine aura overflowing from within me will completely control it! "

Oh man, she went and said it...

A devilish smile rose to Yozora's face.

"Hmph, if you're going to be that persistent about it then I'll stack your hair for you. I've been doing my own hair maintenance for a while now, so I'm fairly good at it."

"Rika has tons of hair products sitting around in the Rika room, so wait here while Rika grabs them!"

Rika ran out of the clubroom.

"Eh!? U-um, wait..."

A tinge of regret found its way to Sena's face after she realized what she'd said, but it was too late.

Thus, the project to make Sena's hair into "The Tower" began. Sena sat down in the chair we set up in front of the clubroom's full-length mirror.

"D-don't do anything crazy, ok!?"

Sena said, clearly scared.

"Don't move, Meat."

Yozora held a brush in one hand, and gently ran it through Sena's hair.

As you'd expect from someone who spent several years taking care of her own long hair, she was incredibly good at it.

Even Sena, who had a strained look on her face when they started, slowly shifted to a more relaxed one.

"Hmph, you're not bad. Having another girl brush my hair actually feels pretty good too."

Sena said in a happy tone of voice.

"Haa~ Sena-senpai, your hair is so smooth. You don't have any split ends either."

Rika seriously said while brushing Sena's hair with Yozora.

Just as you'd expect from a genius inventor girl(?), her brushing was just as smooth as Yozora's.

"...I suppose I can compliment you too, if we're only talking about your hair," said Yozora.

"Rika is just as jealous of your pretty hair too, Yozora."

"You're right, if we're only talking about hair, Yozora's is compliment-worthy too. She has an awful personality, but really pretty hair. Yeah, only the hair... Wait, what are you talking about? Rika your hair's pretty and smooth too."

"Eh, you think so?"

"Yeah. I've actually been a little jealous of that pretty black hair of yours before."

"If you're going to say that, then Rika will let you know she's wanted to have been born with pretty blonde hair like yours before too. You have too, right Yozora-senpai?"

"Well, I suppose I have considered it once in a while."

"Oh? Really?"

.....

Girl talk.

It's like there's this "The Girl's Territory" I shouldn't be a part of.

"Aniki, I've prepared tea."

"Thanks."

Sip sip sip.

I continued to blankly stare at the three high school girls next to me while sipping tea with Yukimura.

"Ok, it's finally time to get to making a tower."

Yozora said, having finished brushing Sena's hair.

"How do you think we should style it?"

"Let's see... Meat, do you have any requests?"

"Hmmm~"

Sena, who was now in full relaxed mode, thought for a while and said,

"I don't really get 'The Tower' in the first place, but make it how a normal would do it, if you can."

"So normals are the theme, huh... Hmm..."

"That's a rather difficult order... Normals..."

"Normals... If you're talking about normals, then... summer?"

"Ah, that's a good idea Yozora-senpai. Shall we give her the image of a normal enjoying her summer to the fullest then?"

"Hmm, sure, let's do that."

"Ok, then... We'll add some waves on the sides to simulate the ebb and flow on the beach."

"Ok."

Rika and Yozora skillfully brushed both sides of Sena's hair into a wave shape as they added more and more hair spray.

"Hmm... It won't be very unique if we only have this one thing going on. Let's add some curled locks of hair here and there to accent it with the feel of the swirling tides."

"Ah, that sounds good."

...S-swirling tides?

"Also, we can curl the hair over here to add the feeling of a summer storm."

Rika dumped a ton more hair spray into Sena's hair, and then began to make a wild curl out of it.

"Wow, this sense of unbalance is pretty good."

"Isn't it~? What do you think, Sena-senpai?"

"Eh? Ah, yeah... it looks ok, I guess?"

Sena's face said she wasn't exactly satisfied with it.

"Now then, let's get to work on the top now too. What should we do?"

"We've got the sea imagery on the sides, so let's make the top have the feeling of a sand castle."

"That's wonderful! A castle would suit Sena's gorgeous (lol) image perfectly! Oh, right, why don't we add a bikini on top as a ribbon too!?"

"You're a genius! The sea, a sand castle, a swimsuit... now that we've got all this, it makes me want to add a watermelon and fireworks."

"We certainly can't leave those two out! Aha, this matches a normal perfectly! It has everything normals would come to do at a summer beach in it!"

"Yeah! Also, since we're going with the sea, let's add some yakisoba! And some curry!"

"Oh yeah! The yakisoba Kodaka-senpai made for us at that training camp was really delicious, wasn't it!?"

"Ok, let's decorate the waves with yakisoba!"

"Y-yakisoba...!?"

Sena's face went stiff again.

"Yukimura, go buy us some yakisoba, a swimsuit, watermelon, and some fireworks please."

"Understood. Allow me to handle the task of running errands to complete this tower of Sena-anego's honor."

Yukimura left the clubroom oddly happy after Rika asked him to go get things.

After he left, Yozora and Rika kept on playing around with Sena's hair, stacking it higher and higher.

"Uuu... Kodakaaa..."

Sena looked like she was about to cry as she directed her eyes over at me.

Sorry, but there's nothing I can do about it now.

I averted my eyes from hers, and started reading a book while watching the three of them out of the corner of my eye.

""It's doneeeeeee!!""

I turned around after hearing Yozora's and Rika's shouts of joy... and I stood there at a loss for words.

...T-this is just too awful...

There were branches of hair randomly sticking out from the side and back, along with **yakisoba** mixed in here and there, and a **bikini** tied on the top like a ribbon.

A beautifully woven Japanese castle lay at the top, and there were **fireworks**, **melon bread**(I'm guessing this is the watermelon's replacement), **a dead dragonfly**, and **a cicada's shell**(apparently Yukimura just picked it up on a whim when he saw it) randomly mixed in everywhere as decorations. There was also some fried squid and a chocolate banana sticking out from the castle tower like a pair of antennae.

.....This is bullying no matter how you look at it.

However, Yozora, Rika, and Yukimura (who joined in after he got back from buying the fireworks) didn't seem to feel that way at all as the three of them wiped the sweat off their foreheads full of a sense of accomplishment.

"I call it —— 'The Ultimate Normal @ A Midsummer Night's Dream Mega MAX Tower'"

Yozora triumphantly declared.

As for Sena and her newfound awful hairstyle, she was wearing a look of anger, sadness, and humiliation all rolled into one on her face as her body shook, full of those emotions.

"Sena-senpai you're so super cute~♥ Rika wants to give it a try sometime too!"

Rika's eyes were sparkling like diamonds.

There wasn't a hint of sarcasm in her voice at all. It looks like she really thinks 'The Ultimate Normal @ A Midsummer Night's Dream Mega MAX Tower' is a cute hairstyle.

"Ahh... So cute... Really... You're really cute!"

Surprisingly, Yozora made a bright, girl-like (I mean she is a girl , but you know) smile too.

It doesn't look like she's acting either.

"Uahhhh, what a waste! I wish I could've tried out 'The Tower' once before I cut my hair too...!"

Yozora said, looking like she was actually upset about it.

I just do not get women...

"That is a fantastic way to style your hair, Sena-anego. I have no doubt you'll be able to die a wonderful death now."

More weird compliments coming from Yukimura.

...I understand Yukimura even less than women.

Well, anyway, after seeing their reactions, Sena's face softened up.

"R-really? You think it suits me that well?"

Sena said as she looked at her very original hairstyle in the mirror. Looks like she's not all that upset about it.

"It super totally suits you, Senpai!"

"Yeah... I hate to admit it, but it does."

"The cicadas and dragonfly give it a fleeting feeling, and it has a certain presence to it that tells others it isn't just for show."

"Hmm~... Hnn~ Hmm~... Hnn, you've got a point, this might be pretty good..."

...Are you kidding me?

"Hehe♪ Hey what do you think? How do I look, Kodaka?"

Sena asked, clearly in a good mood now.

I pulled back, and showed her a forced smile before saying,

"Yeah... It's like, it really screams 'Sena' to me."

Your hopelessness that is.

"Hehehe, doesn't it!?"

Not only Sena, but Yozora and the rest all had a satisfied smile float to their faces after hearing my reply.

...That day, Sena went home wearing her new 'The Ultimate Normal @ A Midsummer Night's Dream Mega MAX Tower' hairstyle.

The next morning, I happened to run into Sena at the school's entrance.

I was secretly relieved to see that her hair was back to how it usually is.

"Uuu~ Kodaka~"

Sena moaned with a sad look on her face.

"Papa yelled at me when I got home yesterday... He spanked me, and made me put my hair back to how it was, and it was awful..."

"I-I see."

..."Good job Pegasus," I thought to myself.

By the way, when we got to club later that day, Yozora and Rika looked like they were honestly feeling bad about what they did, and told Sena, "We got really into it and kept saying how cute your hair was yesterday, but when we think back on it, it really wasn't." Yozora even gave her a rare apology, and said, "I went a little overboard. Sorry."

Sena yelled "At least stop while it's still just a funny story for later!" in return and ran out of the clubroom in tears.

Service Time (Nude Kashiwazaki Scene Included)

One Friday after school.

I didn't go to the clubroom, and was instead studying in the library.

I could probably study in the clubroom too, but if I went there Sena and Rika would be playing video games, Maria and Kobato would be fighting, and a bunch of other stuff would be there to distract me, so I figure if I'm gonna really study I might as well do it in the library.

However, lately I've seen a lot of other students studying in the library on breaks and after school, and it was pretty hard to find a seat.

And even if I managed to get one, anyone who sits at the same desk as me has a panic stricken face, and it hurts when despite the place being packed, only the area around me is full of open seats.

I'm just here studying normally too...

That aside, as for why there are so many students studying here lately, that would be because it's almost time for finals.

Our school is on a semester system, so the first semester's finals are given the second half of September.

A semester is fairly long, so the tests cover lots of material, and you have to really study to do well on them.

I was thinking about all this as I studied for my tests, when all of a sudden,

Ring ding ding ding♪

"!?"

A stupid noise came from inside my bag.

It was the alert sound for my incoming texts.

The whole room was completely quiet, so the noise echoed loud enough for everyone to hear, drawing their gazes to me.

Crap, I forgot to turn it on silent...

Up until we exchanged addresses during summer break, I'd hardly ever gotten any text messages, so it's only natural I'm not used to turning it onto silent when I'm in the library or something.

Anyway, I quickly fished the phone out of my bag and checked it.

The phone made a "Diding~♪" sound as I opened it, and made the default "beep♪" noise every time I hit a button.

Ahhh, this is so awkward!

I need to turn this thing onto silent before I check the text!

Umm, let's see, how do you turn this thing onto silent mode again...

Beep Beep Beep Beep... While ironically making a ton of noise as I tried to stop making noise, at last I managed to put it in silent mode.

Kh... Who would've guessed the button for silent mode was on the side...

While cursing myself in my head, I finally got to reading the text.

It was from Sena.

Title: Today
Message: Why didn't you come to club today?

I shot back a quick "I'm studying for our tests." in response.

A short while later, Sena replied with a text that read "Who cares about that? Come to the clubroom."

"I care." was my reply to that, to which I added "Is there something going on in the clubroom?"

After waiting for a while again, Sena sent a new text.

There's nobody here except Yukimura (>_<)

(>_<)

Now that I think about it, Yozora did say she wasn't going today because there was some new book she wanted to get...

It's not like the Neighbors Club has any set activities anyway, so we're pretty much free to skip when we want.

Rika and Kobato don't come sometimes too, and Maria doesn't come when she has work to do.

But still, all alone with Yukimura huh...

I spent a day alone with Yukimura during summer break too, and it was definitely a trying experience.

Oh well... I'd feel bad leaving her like that, so I guess I'll go.

As I thought that to myself and closed my textbook, I got another new text.

Kobato-chan came (*^_^*) I don't need you anymore Kodaka (^^)/

"...Oh. Is that so?"

I said, giving my phone a look of annoyance and I opened up my textbook again.

That night.

I was studying in my room when I got another text from Sena.

Title: By the way
Message: Are you in trouble with finals?

"I dunno." was my reply.

That was the honest truth too.

The school I came from was behind in terms of material covered , so catching up took a lot of work, but I think I'll be able to get decent grades on any subject as long as I don't slack on my studying.

However, this'll be my first set of finals since I transferred here, so the one big thing bothering me was the fact that I don't know how hard St. Chronica Academy's finals are.

A few minutes after I sent my reply,

Then come to my place. I'll help you study.

Sena's invitation was exactly what I needed.

Sena's apparently number 1 in our school, and if she lets me take a look at her finals from last year, I'll be able to get a feel for how this years'll be.

Thus, I immediately replied: "OK".

And so, we reached the next day, Saturday.

After Kobato and I ate at home, I headed for the Kashiwazaki estate.

I got on the bus that goes to St. Chronica Academy, went 5 stops past the school, and got off.

On top of the hill in front of the bus stop stood a large western-style mansion - the one in which Sena lived.

I walked up the long cobbled road up to the mansion's entrance.

As I approached, I saw a man standing out front with his arms crossed.

"Geh..." I reflexively moaned at the sight.

It was a casually dressed, handsome man with his hair tied up in the back —— He is both Sena's father and the chairman of St. Chronica Academy, Pegasus Kashiwazaki.

I wonder why he's standing out front like that... And I get the feeling he's totally staring at me...!

I instinctively put my guard up as the chairman said in his solemn voice,

"I see you've come again, Kodaka."

"Ah, yes, it's been a while, Mr. Chairman."

"Mu..."

I gave my greetings, but the chairman's head twitched for some reason.

Eh, d-did I do something to piss him off...?

I stood there, nervous, until he said,

"Hmph... Anyway, come in."

He then slowly opened the huge doors, and let us inside the mansion.

Sena came down the stairs after we all got in.

"Ah, hey Kodaka, you're here already?"

"...Well then, give it your all studying for those finals."

The chairman said before starting to walk away from me.

"Huh, Papa, you're not gonna talk to Kodaka more?" Sena called out to the chairman.

"No," he replied without turning around.

"? What're you talking about?"

"Hmm, Papa always asks me every little thing about you, so I thought he might have something important to talk to you about."

"I-I-I-I-I didn't ask you about him that much!!"

The chairman yelled in a flustered voice with a deep red face.

He then cleared his throat, going "Ahem." trying to play it off.

"Hmph, Hayato asked me to take care of you. It's obvious I want to make sure you're doing ok."

The chairman said in the most casual voice he could muster, before quickly walking off farther into the mansion.

I don't really get that guy.

Sena and I looked at each other, and Sena said,

"Anyway, wanna get started now?"

And so, Sena guided me upstairs to her room.

...It was only after getting this far that I finally started thinking to myself that I was in a pretty crazy situation right now.

Last time I came here, I stayed in a guest room and never saw Sena's.

This is gonna be the first time I've ever gone into another girl's room aside from Kobato.

I'm getting kinda nervous now...

Sena, who didn't seem to notice what I was thinking at all, opened up the door to her room like it was nothing.

"Here, go on in."

"O-ok..."

I made the first step into Sena's room with my heart pounding like crazy.

The first girl's room I've ever been in.

And the first thing that flew into my eyes was Yozora's face.

I-I don't think it makes much sense either, but that's the truth...

The desk, chair, bookshelf, closet, and bed were all simple, but they had a high quality feel to them that gave the room a relaxed atmosphere.

The big screen TV and video games lying around were very Sena-like.

And the one thing in the middle of the room emitting an incredibly uncomfortable feeling, was the idol poster-like thing stuck to the ceiling with giant pictures of Yozora plastered all over it.

"Why are pictures of Yozora-!?"

There was a picture of Yozora, reading a book on the sofa.

There was one of her walking in the hallway.

There was a close-up of her sleeping too, probably from the time we went to the training camp.

There was one of her lighting fireworks.

There was one of her with her hair cut that looked like it was from the time she was writing Kobato's reading reflection.

There were five in total, and Yozora didn't seem to be aware of the camera in any of them.

In other words, these were voyeur shots.

"I took pretty good pictures, don't you think?"

Sena said with a bit of pride.

"It was a total pain, because that idiot hardly ever leaves herself open~"

"...You took all of these?"

"Yep. In secret with my digital camera."

Sena happily nodded.

I was there for the fireworks and when she was writing the reading reflection, but I didn't notice at all.

Scary... She's scary...

"W-why would you... Don't tell me that you're actually a le..."

I asked, seriously afraid of her.

"Hah? I'm actually a what?"

Sena said with a puzzled look on her face, and then walked over to her bed and happily pointed at her pillow.

"Here, look at this."

There was a wig of blonde hair like Sena's on top of the pillow.

"Is this from back when..."

"Yep."

That wig is the one Yozora wore as part of her Sena cosplay back when we practiced telling funny stories.

"Why do you have this..."

"I bought it from Yozora. For 10,000 yen."

I stood there with a "?" over my head, and Sena nonchalantly continued,

"They say people will endure unspeakable hardships for revenge, don't they?"

"Eh? Y-yeah, I guess."

That saying of hers came from an ancient ruler of China who slept on firewood and licked raw, bitter livers everyday so he wouldn't forget his grudge and could eventually get his revenge, if I remember correctly.

"So that's it, basically."

What's *it* exactly?

"By seeing Yozora's stupid face and sniffing her wig before I go to bed at night, I'll remember all the times she's humiliated me, which keeps the feeling of wanting to get revenge on her fresh in my mind."

THIS IS THE PEAK OF HOPELESS NESS RIGHT HERE
BY SEEING YOZORA'S STUPID FACE,
AND SNIFFING HER WIG BEFORE I GO TO BED AT NIGHT,
I'LL REMEMBER ALL THE TIMES SHE'S HUMILIATED ME,
WHICH KEEPS THE FEELING OF WANTING TO GET REVENGE ON HER
FRESH IN MY MIND.

It felt like she wanted to say "Look how great I am!"

I-I can't believe she actually smells it...

I could feel nothing but terror after hearing Sena tell me about yet another one of her hopeless activities that easily tops the list of all the insane stuff she does.

The excitement I had about entering a girl's room for the first time was totally blown away.

Sena Kashiwazaki... a truly fearsome woman in more than one way.

"Hehe, I'll have her begging for mercy one of these days!"

Sena declared, while looking up at Yozora's pictures.

Although I'd just had a new trauma planted within me by taking only a single step into her room, Sena and I quickly began studying for finals like we'd originally planned.

We had our textbooks and notebooks spread out on the round table in the center of the room.

We started by having her show me the final questions from her freshman year, and I was relieved to see that the difficulty of the questions didn't vary much from the previous schools I'd been at.

Since this place is a missionary school, it obviously had more ethics and world history questions than your average high school, but not so much that it was unreasonable.

Thus, having confirmed that, we began to study normally.

Having Sena, the top of our class, help out should make things much easier.....There was a time when I once thought that too.

The fact that people who get good grades without trying are bad at teaching is nothing new, but Sena takes it to a whole new level.

Whenever I asked her to show me how to do a math problem, she'd spit out the answer like that, but I had no idea what she was talking about when she tried to explain how she figured it out.

It eventually came to her just insulting me by saying "Why can't you solve such a simple problem!? Are you retarded!?" and such.

And obviously, getting yelled at isn't something I enjoy, so I gave up on asking Sena and relied on my own abilities to try and figure out anything I didn't know.

However, Sena seemed to be bored when I did, because anytime I looked stumped she'd yell "Want me to show you how

to do it!? Do you want the academy's number one goddess to show you how to do it!?" or something in a gleeful voice before giving me another shitty explanation. And each time it ended with her yelling "Kodaka you idiottttttt!"

Why didn't I just stay home and do this myself...

As I began to regret my decision to come here, a single woman came into the room and announce in a crisp voice,

"Pardon my intrusion."

It was the blond haired, butler uniform wearing beauty, and the Kashiwazaki family's steward, Stella.

"I have brought beverages for you."

"Ah, thanks Stella," said Sena.

Stella placed the tray of black tea and sponge cakes on the table.

She then gave me a nod with less of an expression than a Noh mask.

"It has been quite some time, Mr. Kodaka."

"Ah, yeah, nice to see you..."

"How are things progressing on your end?"

"Progressing...? Bit by bit I guess."

I haven't made any progress studying at all actually... but I'll keep it to myself.

"Oh, is that right?"

Said Stella as she took something out of her pocket and slipped it into my hand.

"If it pleases you, please make use of it."

"?"

I took a look at whatever it was Stella handed me.

It was a small square plastic package—— In other words, that little piece of rubber used for 18+ activities.

"Wha- Huh!? Ehh!?"

"Now then, I shall take my leave." Stella gave me another short bow as I stood there confused before leaving the room.

"What'd Stella give you, Kodaka?"

"N-nothing!"

I quickly shoved it into my pocket, and took a sip of my black tea.

"Uwa- That's hot!"

...Stella is as confusing as ever I see...

After helping ourselves to black tea and cake, we resumed our studying.

However, Sena must've lost all will to study after taking a break , because she started rolling on the floor going "Ahhhh, thissss issss soooo borrrinnngggg!"

Her skirt kept getting rolled up to the point I could nearly see underneath, which had me fishing my eyes around, unsure where to look.

"Ah, I know!"

Sena happily said, and bolted straight up.

"Let's play a video game! Come on!"

"A video game? You know..."

Although... maybe a change of pace would be good.

I nodded, saying "Just a little bit then." after thinking it over.

Sena picked the new "Kurogane Necromancer" PS3 fighting game based on that anime Kobato likes so much.

Despite the fact it was just a spin-off from the main series, it was pretty good for a fighting game, and a lot of people could probably get into it even without knowing the anime.

From the looks of it, the game hasn't changed much from the previous one, so I'll probably be ok.

"Kobato-chan likes this anime, right? I bought all the blu-rays the other day too. I haven't watched them yet, but the next time Kobato-chan comes over... fuhuhuhuhuhu."

Sena selected her character with a creepy smile on her face.

While wondering whether Kobato would ever brave the task of coming to this house again (by the way, when I asked her "Wanna come with me?" she told me "NO!" with a face that looked like she just ate a jarful of sour plums), I picked my character too, and we started the fight.

As usual with her, Sena was so good you would never have guessed she just bought the game, and was about as good as me at it.

It's a lot of fun playing against somebody as good as you are.

We ended up completely losing track of time, and getting sucked into an endless series of matches.

By the time I came back to my senses, it was already half past seven.

"Crap...!"

I'm such an idiot, how could I forget all about studying!?

"Hnnnn, that was fun!! Those were some good matches!"

Sena showed me a big smile while stretching her arms out.

"...Yeah yeah, I had fun too."

By the way, the final record of wins and losses had Sena on top.

That part kinda sucked.

...Nothing I can do about the studying now... I'll work on it some more at home I guess.

"Alright, I should probably head ho-"

As I was about to finish my sentence,

"Milady, Mr. Kodaka, I've prepared your meals."

Stella's voice entered the room with such perfect timing it was like she was waiting for it.

...Looks like I won't be going home just yet.

I sent a text to Kobato that read "Heat something up or eat some instant noodles tonight, ok?" before heading down for dinner at the Kashiwazaki household.

It was Sena, the chairman, and I sitting at the table.

The main dish was Japanese, just like when I came before, and was just as good as last time too.

"Thank you for the meal. Ok, now I should really-"

"Kodaka."

The chairman interrupted me with his stern voice.

"Stay here tonight."

"No, umm-"

"Stay here."

"...Ok."

And so I did.

"Haa..."

I had just gotten into the Kashiwazaki estate's giant bathtub, and let out a big sigh as I washed myself.

How should I say it, it's like... just being in this house is exhausting...!

For someone like me who's basically never stayed over at other people's houses, let alone going over to a friend's, being treated so courteously in this giant mansion really makes me feel restless, like I'm the away team or something.

Not that I think the chairman or Stella are bad people, but...

As those thoughts crossed my mind, the door to the bathroom creaked open all of a sudden.

"!?"

I turned around in a panic, and what flew into my eyes was,

Meat.

.....'s dad.

"Wh...!? C-chairman...!?"

Pegasus Kashiwazaki stood before me stark naked with nothing but a towel over his shoulder.

He was thin, but didn't look like he was weak in the least, and there wasn't so much as a shred of excess flab on that body of his.

His skin was so smooth-looking you'd never believe he was in his 40's.

His proportions were in perfect symmetry; it was almost as if he'd been carved by a master sculptor.

...I wanted to cry when I realized how I was calmly describing what a naked old man looked like.

"I'll wash your back."

I was speechless as the chairman walked his way over to me (with his thing in plain sight).

"I-I'm fine, thanks though!"

The chairman made a look of admiration on his face as he nodded his head up and down.

"Good... I see you're as modest as ever. If you were Hayato, no doubt you would have thrown the soap over to me, ready and waiting. However, you can relax, there's nothing to worry about."

Oh yes there is!

In the time it took me to yell at him in my head, the chairman had already grabbed the soap by my side and sat down behind me .

Why... Why did this have to happen...!?

The chairman grabbed a tub and scooped some hot water from the bath into it, then wet his towel and started washing.

And as he did, the towel went "Mush! Mush!" on my back.

Uwa... Honestly..... this feels pretty good.

"How is it?"

"Y-yes! It's good!"

This is the first time I've ever had someone wash my back since my dad did back when I was in grade school.

I did wash Kobato's back a lot up until last year though.

"...Doing this reminds me of the first time Hayato dragged me off to a public bath," said the chairman in a nostalgic voice.

I don't really know what you expect me to say to that.

"By the way, Kodaka."

"Y-yes?"

The chairman paused for a second, and then asked in a timid voice,

"Is my Sena getting bullied at school by chance?"

.....Huh?

"No, I don't think that she is..."

Far from it, I'm pretty sure she spends most of her time at school acting like some kind of Queen.

According to what I've heard the girls hate her, but I don't think they're bullying her either.

"Hmm... I see..."

"Did something happen recently?"

I asked, to which to chairman begrudgingly replied,

"...It's just, the other day... You might not believe me if I tell you, but... Sena came home with fried squid and yakisoba in her hair..."

"Bft!"

I choked on my own breath.

"...Is something the matter?"

"N-no, it's nothing!"

"I see... Sena tried telling me 'This is the best kind of hairstyle for me,' and such, so I ended up giving her a good scolding, but... If I think back on it, there's no way somebody would wear such a ridiculous hairstyle. My Sena is a very prideful girl... so I started

getting worried that she was acting tough and trying to hide the fact that somebody was bullying her..."

"oH, iS tHaT sO...?"

I said, my face completely petrified at this point.

"U-um, by the way, Mr. Chairman, have you gone into Sena's room lately...?"

I asked, still wary of whether I should or not.

"No, she started to find it annoying whenever I went in her room around the time she entered high school. She is a young girl at that age though, so I don't mind it much."

I must say, that's a very respectable thing to say, both as her father and the chairman.

There's no way I can tell him "You know, your daughter has voyeur shots of this girl who always makes her cry hung up in her room, and she acts like a total freak, smelling a wig that girl wore before."

"W-well, anyway, I'm pretty sure she's not getting bullied, probably..."

If anything, she's probably got nothing on her mind other than revenge.

"Hrm... Well I hope you're right..."

The chairman seemed to be even more worried now, so I told him,

"I-if I do find out about anyone bullying Sena though, I'll make sure to keep her safe! So don't worry about it."

The chairman scooped more water into his tub, and washed my back some more.

He then said to me, in a stern, but also affectionate voice,

"I see... please do, Kodaka. I feel like you're a man I can entrust Sena to."

"Thanks," I replied.

...Back then, I hadn't realized the irreversible situation I was slowly falling into.

The Homoge Club

One day after school, I entered the clubroom to find Sena, Yukimura, and a girl who I didn't know.

It was a small girl with semi-long hair, wearing a white lab coat —— wait a minute.

"The heck, it's just Rika..."

"That's the first thing you say after looking at Rika!?"

Rika raised her voice in protest.

By the way, the reason I couldn't tell who it was right away, was because Rika let down the ponytail she usually wears, and didn't have her glasses on either.

I saw her with her hair down over summer break too, but this is the first time I've ever seen her without glasses.

"Where are your glasses?"

"Rika didn't bring them today. Rika figured it'd be nice to try not wearing them for once, sort of like giving Rika a new image."

Rika casually said, and to be honest, Rika actually *does* look pretty cute with her hair down and no glasses. I'd say her new image was a success, but...

"You said you'd try not wearing glasses for once... Does that mean you have contacts in right now?"

Rika tilted her head sideways, and said,

"Didn't you know? They were just for show."

"Seriously?"

I honestly shook from the shock.

"Yes, Rika's eyesight isn't particularly bad."

"Seriously...? Why were you wearing them then?"

"Well, they're for show, so obviously to be fashionable."

"...Never thought I'd hear the word 'fashionable' come out of *your* mouth."

"You could say Rika was trying to look her part."

"Ah, now that makes sense."

"...It's kind of irritating how easily you accepted that."

Rika pursed her lips in displeasure.

"So, what do you think, Senpai? How does Rika look? Nnnnn~?"

Rika put an impish smile on her face as she ran one hand through the hair running down her back.

She didn't have that cool feel Yozora did before she cut her hair, and she wasn't going to be turning any heads like Sena, but unlike those two, who are so perfect it's almost hard to approach them, she had a much more friendly cuteness to her.

It makes me wonder if a girl like her would be more popular with guys than some kind of super popular school idol.

Rika's always had a slightly childish face, but when you take away the ponytail and glasses, it really emphasizes that simple yet alluring charm of hers.

A good way to put it would be to say that she has the beauty of a lone flower blooming atop a hill.

And if I had to say whether I like it or not, honestly, it's right in my strike zone.

"A good way to put it would be to say that she has the beauty of a lone flower blooming atop a hill—— and if I had to say whether I liked it or not, honestly, it's right in my strike zone..."

"!?"

In an instant, Rika's face turned bright red .

"Hm?"

"W-w-w-w-w-w-what are you saying all of a sudden, Senpai!?"

Rika protested with her face still beet red.

"Wait... did I say that out loud?"

"You did!"

"O-oh."

That's a little embarrassing then.

Squish!

"Guohh!?"

Yozora, who was standing next to me, for some reason dug her heel into my foot all of a sudden.

And damn, did it hurt.

"What the hell did you do that for!?"

"...No reason."

Yozora said with an expression so mysterious I had absolutely no idea what she was thinking.

"...Why don't you just go and die." "Aniki..."

Sena gave me a cold stare, and Yukimura looked like he was about to cry.

"Rika never thought Kodaka-senpai had such strong sexual feelings for Rika...! Let's go do some naughty things together, Senpai! Let's do it right now!"

"Are you retarded!?"

"Oh, that's right. Rika supposes that was a bit too vulgar for a beautiful girl, wasn't it...? Rika has to talk properly here... Would you care to join Rika in some acts of a naughty nature, Senpai?"

"...Haaaaaa~~..."

A feeling of disappointment swept over my heart as I let out a deep sigh.

"Damn it... Why do you have to be Rika?—— If only you weren't Rika... Damn it, is there no God in this world...!?"

Just to reiterate, that look of hers is right in my strike zone.

Which is exactly why this is so... so very...

"You hate Rika's personality enough to grind your teeth with a face that looks like you despise the entire world!? Rika's the one who wants to cry here!!"

Rika complained, with an upset looking sullen expression on her face.

Haa, no matter how good she looks, it's still Rika...

"Haa... Maybe I'll study or something."

"Y-you hurt Rika's heart so badly, yet you don't even *try* to act nice...!? That's so terrible of you, Senpai... On the other hand, though... Rika wishes she didn't, but Rika feels something from it...!"

I took my notebook and textbook out of my bag while watching Rika with her head hung down, with what looked like conflicting emotions, out of the corner of my eye.

But still, there's Kobato changing her clothes for summer, Yozora cutting her hair, and now this. It's like all of our club members are tossing out their old symbolic traits.

"Senpai, you seem so cold today... Fine, Rika doesn't care anymore. Rika will flee into the 2D world to heal her heart."

Rika said, sulking, before taking a square, plastic package out of her bag.

She opened up the package, and grabbed the disc inside.

"Sena-senpai, can I use the TV?"

"Sure, I don't mind."

Rika turned on the TV after getting Sena's permission, and went on to turn on the PS3 connected to it too.

By the way, that PS3 is the one that Rika won at the shooting gallery from that summer festival we went to.

"You're gonna play a game?"

"It's an anime. Amazones just delivered the blu-ray to Rika yesterday."

Rika stuck the blu-ray disc into the PS3.

After a short while, the studio's logo came up on screen.

"What anime is it?" asked Sena, to which Rika replied,

"The Homoge Club Movie."[1]

THWACK!

Yozora smacked Rika on the head with her flyswatter the second she answered.

"What kind of shameless filth are you trying to watch in our clubroom!?"

"You know about it?" I asked.

"N-no, of course I don't know about it. But just from hearing that title you can tell it's going to be *that* kind of movie!"

In a strong voice, Rika objected to the shouting Yozora, whose face was deep red, .

"There's nothing shameless about it! It's true that the original work is an 18+ BL game from MF Soft-KHiRAL, but the anime didn't include any of the extreme scenes, so that even a little kid could enjoy it! There *are* a few sexy parts in the movie, but it's not a porno. It's a normal movie through and through!"

"Who cares? Like that even matters!"

"It does matter! Here, take a goooood look! It's not there, is it!? There's no 18+ mark, is there!?"

Rika shoved the disc case into Yozora's face.

Drawn on the cover, aside from the title that read "The Homoge Club Movie", there was a well-built pretty boy with an innocent face and pink hair, and another macho looking pretty boy with green hair and a sleek appearance (there should be limits to how stupidly macho one guy can be), who were smiling as they rested their shoulders on each other.

Only the upper halves of their bodies were drawn, so you couldn't tell, but they were probably supposed to be naked.

"D-don't shove that thing in my face! Even if it's not an 18+ movie, with a title and case like that, how could it possibly be any good?"

"Rika thinks you shouldn't go around judging a book by its cover!"

"I-I told you to stay away from meeee!"

Yozora let out a scream, as Rika continued to push the case at her.

As they continued their scuffle,

"She's got a point. You shouldn't judge something you don't know anything about other than how it looks."

I said in a fairly serious tone of voice.

Yozora yelled, "Kodaka!?" with a look of shock on her face, and Rika yelled, "Kodaka-senpai!" with an expression so bright it was glowing.

It's true, I think that what Rika's saying is right.

For someone like me, who's spent his whole life having people judge him just because of how he looks, there's just no way I can ignore someone trying to do just that.

"Even if you end up not changing your opinion, I still think you should at least watch it first. Saying something's bad just because of what it looks like... isn't fair..."

"Mu...! Fine, if you say so, then I'll..."

Yozora said, with a clearly disappointed voice.

"That's Rika's Kodaka-senpai. Ok then, let's watch 'The Homoge Club' together, Yozora-senpai. It's mostly a retelling of the TV series with a bunch of new scenes, so you should be alright even though you've never seen it before!"

Rika said, full of vigor, but Yozora simply reluctantly nodded and sat down next to her as the movie started playing.

"...Hmph, why do I have to..."

"Come on, don't say that. Rika's sure even *you'll* be moved by this wonderful and corrupt friendship among men, hehehe....."

".....A wonderful friendship, huh... Hrm..."

Yozora whispered with a meek look on her face.

I think she missed part of what Rika said, but... Well, whatever.

Just after that, the studio's logo faded off the screen, and the actual movie began.

I sat myself down next to Yozora.

I'm the one who told her to watch it before she judged it, so of course I have to watch it too.

"The Homoge Club Movie ~Our True Future Awaits~"

A picture of a school came up on screen, along with the title and the sound of a chime ringing.

The general plot of the movie is as follows:

An incredibly average high schooler, Fumio Kusakabe (the one with the pink hair on the case), has just transferred into a certain all boys school. He originally planned on joining the football team, but sadly the club was abolished last year.

As he was looking around for a different club, he found a poster showing two muscular men, covered in sweat, tightly grasping each other's shoulders.

As Fumio stood there captivated by the poster, a green-haired pretty boy (the other macho guy on the cover), named Koyomi Fujioka, called out to him.

"Wanna join our club?"

"Uho-"

Fumio immediately agreed to join the club for men who love games about romance between men beyond all else, aka the " Homoge Club".

Fumio didn't know anything about homoge at first, but after playing some of the homoge and reading some BL manga his fellow club members recommended to him, and then talking about them, he gradually grew more and more immersed in the world of homoge.

At first I thought the story was ridiculous, and yelled in my head "Why the hell are they all so ripped when all they do is read!? ", but I eventually lost myself in the strange, yet fun days they spent together.

They were exactly like what I imagined a group of normals to be like. They played their games together, had discussions about which ones they liked, sometimes took things too far and got into a fight, and even sung homoge theme songs at a karaoke bar.

I wanted to live a life like that...

I actually felt happy when they finally managed to finish their first doujin game together, and felt just as sad when they weren't able to sell a single copy at the doujin event they went to.

I was really moved by how much Fumio had grown when he said, "Let's give it all we've got at the next event too!" and got everyone to focus on making the next game too.

The climax of the movie focused on one teacher who didn't like the Homoge Club and was trying to destroy it. I seriously almost let a few tears slip at the part when Fumio and Koyomi went in front of the whole school and started telling everyone how much they loved homoge.

Taking a peek at Yozora sitting next to me, I could see that her eyes were watery.

"Hehe, so? How was it, Yozora-senpai?"

Asked Rika with a triumphant look on her face after she noticed Yozora's tears with her eagle-eyes.

In a hurry, Yozora wiped her tears, and said,

"H-hmph... It was OK..."

In a quiet voice, trying to hide her face by looking at the screen.

The bonds of the club members, especially between Fumio and Koyomi, became much stronger after overcoming the greatest threat to their club they'd ever seen.

Then, the scene changed to Koyomi's room.

"You're the first one I've ever invited into my room."

Koyomi told Fumio, seemingly a little embarrassed.

Koyomi then began to talk about himself.

Koyomi, who was able to easily get along with anyone he met, actually had a tragic past, and as a result, was left unable to get any closer than absolutely necessary to other people.

"Thanks for telling me about all that, Koyomi."

Fumio smiled with tears in his eyes after hearing about Koyomi's past.

Koyomi smiled too.

They moved closer to each other, hugged each other, and pressed their lips together in a passio———— Wait, whaaaaaaaaaaat!!!!!!!?????

It was obviously not the kind of kiss a foreigner might give as a greeting. It was a long, deep, French kiss, followed by a close-up of their faces and the screen going black.

"Hn... Hmm... Nn, ah-... Hmm... Nnn♥"

The music of a guy singing a majestic ballad started to play along with their heavy breathing and other noises as the credits began to roll.

I just stared at the screen for a while, utterly lost for words, but Yozora gasped and looked at Rika.

"Phew... It's already been two hours, hasn't it...?"

Rika let a sigh of ecstasy leak out of her mouth.

"I'm glad I was able to view such a splendid work of art."

Said Yukimura, who was standing behind me.

I didn't notice him there at all, but I guess he must've joined us a while ago.

"....."

As for Yozora, she had a scowl on her face that said she wasn't sure how to react, as she glared at the screen in front of her.

"...Rika. I want to ask you something," Yozora curtly stated.

"What is it, Senpai?"

"...A-at the end... w-why did Fumio and Koyomi, um... k-kiss each other?"

Yozora asked, her face red with embarrassment.

"You want to know why they kissed?"

"Y-yeah."

"Well, it's normal for people to kiss, when they have such strong feelings for each other."

Yozora got even more flustered in response to Rika's matter-of-fact answer.

"B-but! They were friends, right!? C-can friends... really do that?"

"They can. Kissing each other after having your feelings aroused is what humans do."

"B-but still, how could friends have... such a passionate..."

Yozora must've remembered that last French kiss scene, because her face went an even deeper shade of red.

"Rather, it's *because* they were friends that they were able to have such a passionate kiss! You heard the sounds they made, right!?"

"B-but isn't that weird!?"

"It's not weird in the least! It's not odd at all for two people who've grown close after overcoming great difficulties to start longing for each other's bodies! In fact, it's perfectly natural! It doesn't matter if you're friends, or both guys, or whatever! Wanting to kiss and have sex with the person you love is the law of nature itself!"

Rika declared that crazy idea of hers, full of confidence.

She seriously just called that a law of nature.

I took a glance behind me, and could tell Yukimura was fiercely shaking his head up and down.

"...Don't go saying 'it doesn't matter if you're both guys' like it's no big deal..."

I told Rika with a look of disdain in my eyes, but she ignored me, as if that were the natural thing to do.

Yozora, on the other hand, looked like she was deep in thought.

Then her lips began to move slightly.

"...I see... so friends can kiss too."

After whispering something I couldn't really hear, the corners of Yozora's mouth started to twitch before a smile of relief broke out on her face for some reason.

"...Hmph, well, that's fine I suppose."

Yozora regained her usual sullen expression.

Mind telling me what's "fine" exactly?

"Well, um... It seems like it was wrong for me to judge it just by appearances after all."

"Ohh! So does this mean you've awakened to the path of the fujoshi as well, Yozora-senpai!?"

"Idio- T-that's not what I meant! I was just trying to say that " The Homoge Club" wasn't too bad... That's it!"

Yozora then looked away from Rika, and said,

"...If you have any other good movies you can bring them too."

"Ok!"

Rika happily nodded, but not before murmuring something with a creepy smile on her face.

"Hehe, Rika's finally found a comrade... However, it'll all have been for naught if you don't pick the next one carefully! Calm yourself, Rika Shiguma...! "My Penis Can't Possibly be This Cute" is really good, but it being 18+ is a bit of a problem... "Haiyottekita yo! Nyaru Otoko-san" has tentacles come up all of a sudden, so that's out... Rika needs something softer, something a general audience would like... "Waruburu Kids" might be right up Yozora-senpai's alley..."

"...I'll pass on anything too weird."

"Hold it right there, Yozora!"

It was none other than Sena, who'd been sitting in a corner playing her own game as we talked about "The Homoge Club", who raised that voice of complaint.

"What, Meat?"

"Don't 'what' me, idiot! You always make fun of me for playing galge in the clubroom, so why is Rika's homo anime ok!? It's not fair!!"

However, Yozora simply went, "Hmph." in return, and then said,

"Because it is a work of art depicting a noble friendship between men, and is in line with our club's goals. Don't think you can put your weird games where you do indecent things with a bunch of weird women on the same level, you stupid piece of meat."

"T-they're not weird games! You better take that back!"

"Hmph, then why don't you try reading the scene you're on right now out loud."

"Uu...!?"

Yozora looked like she just said what came to mind, but Sena's face completely cramped up.

"Hah. Judging from your reaction, it must be another shameless scene nobody would want to actually read out loud, or am I wrong ?"

"I-it's not, but the scene I'm on right now just happens to be... one of *those* scenes, so..."

"Just so you know, I'd be fine reading any scene from "The Homoge Club" out loud. Want to know why? Because it's a noble work of art, not a shameless video game like what you have there!"

Said Yozora, with her chest puffed out in pride. "Gnn..." Sena groaned in response, and said,

"F-fine, then go ahead and try! And no cheating with a poem from some textbook this time either!"

"Fine with me. Go ahead and pick out any scene you want," Yozora casually said.

"Eh, r-really?"

"Of course. I'll show you that I can read any line from 'The Homoge Club' out loud."

"O-ok, but you better not regret this later!"

Sena fiddled with the PS3 and went to a random scene.

"Hmph, this one, huh... I remember it."

"Good, then here goes, ok?"

Sena hit the play button, and the characters all began to passionately speak their lines once again.

Yozora matched them and started talking as well.

""I'll protect you, even if the whole world becomes my enemy!" - "Hmph, that's my line. We'll both fight, together, for the sake of what we hold dear!""

"Uu...! Why did I have to a pick a scene with a cool line like that!?"

Sena moaned in frustration after hearing Yozora say the lines in a voice full of emotion.

By the way, that scene was the one were Fumio and Koyomi resolve themselves to protect the Homoge Club from being disbanded.

That was pretty amazing of Yozora to remember the lines perfectly too...

"Ghh... T-try a different one!"

Sena hit skip a bunch of times, and flew off to another scene.

"No matter what obstacles lay in my path, not a single one can stop me!"

"Gahh! Not another cool line!"

Sena let out another complaint.

"Ahh, come on! Why are there so many cool lines when it has a title like 'The Homoge Club'!?"

"Well, it was a pretty action-oriented movie..." I said.

Rika said that the movie version was a condensed version of the TV anime, but it still had tons of cool lines and highlights, with a good scene every few minutes.

Of course, it wasn't all cool one-liners. It had slice of life and gags too, but I don't think it had anything somebody would be embarrassed to say out loud (aside from that last scene with the heavy breathing maybe).

"If you can't say you love the things you love, then is it not the world that is wrong!?"

Yozora continued on, this time reading a line from the Homoge Club President - Misao Asakura.

"Gugyahh! Another cool one! You stupid ball of muscle!"

"Hmph... You'd be wise not to underestimate Misao."

A sadistic smile rose to Yozora's face as she watched Sena groan in frustration.

"I think that's enough for me. It's your turn now, Meat."

"Uu..."

"What's wrong, Meat? If there really isn't anything to be embarrassed about in that game of yours, then read the scene you're at right now out loud! Do it!"

Yozora kept on pushing Sena to read the line.

"Uuu..."

"Do it!"

"Fungyahhhhhhh!!"

Sena had tears in the corners of her eyes as she roared, and then glared at Yozora.

"Fine! Fine, I'll do it! That guy in your homo anime just said it too! If you can't say you love the things you love, then it's the world that is wrong! If I have to, I'll fight the whole world to protect the honor of my eroge - 'I Got A New Twintail Little Sister All of a Sudden One Day and I Can't Hold Back Anymore'!"

...What the hell kinda title is that?

Sena faced her computer with an awe-inspiring expression on her face.

"I-I'm gonna read it. O... Onii-chan, take your big, hot di... di..."

"Di?"

Sena's face went beet red, and her shoulders were shaking from the humiliation.

"O-Onii-chan, t-take your big, hot... di..."

"I can't hear you! Put some emotion into it!"

"Ghh..."

Sena ground her teeth together after having Yozora yell at her.

She then took a deep breath, and then,

"Onii-chan, take your big, hot di*k,

ram it into my tight little pus*y,

and fill me up with...

all the di*k milk you've got!!"

S-she said it...!

She really said it...!

Wow...

The stunned gazes of the rest of the club were firmly glued to Sena.

"H-hehehe... Don't think you'll always beat me!"

There was something sad about the smile on Sena's face. "...I-I thought it'd be something shameless, but I never thought it'd be so. .."

Yozora mumbled, her face deep red.

Sena then said to Yozora, while breathing wildly,

"Hehe, H-h-how was that...!? See!? I said it!! Now do you get that there's nothing embarrassing about this game at all!?"

"Eh, y-yeah... sure... It's my loss. You win."

"Don't look away when you say it!"

Yozora fiddled with her bangs as she awkwardly turned her face away, while Sena yelled, half in tears.

"Ahh... Even Rika wouldn't be able to do that one~... It feels like Rika would lose something important as a person if Rika did."

"I am stricken with awe. I had no idea Sena-anego was such a perverted woman."

Rika and Yukimura stood there in shock.

Yozora, with her face still turned away from the awkwardness, then said,

"...Well, um... I definitely see how important that game is to you now... I'm sorry for making fun of it..."

Yozora gave an honest apology, but Sena, who was technically the winner, started trembling all over, and then,

"Uwaaaahhhhhhhh~!"

"Yozora, you homoge obsessed perverttttt~~!"

Sena flew out of the clubroom, half in tears, leaving her computer behind.

"...It's not like I'm obsessed, and I'm not a pervert either," Yozora quietly said.

But, well, that certainly was some bad timing for Sena...

I'm sure that even an eroge has some cool lines here and there that wouldn't be embarrassing to read out loud.

While thinking that to myself, I happened to glance down at the screen of the computer Sena left behind.

There was an image of the protagonist doing... *that* kind of thing to a blonde twintail little girl with one red and one blue eye.

...I turned it off by reflex, without bothering to save or anything.

Results of today's activities with the Neighbors Club:

Yozora realized something after watching a BL anime, and Sena lost something important as a person, but managed to protect something important to her in exchange.

Also, Rika changed her hairstyle, but that doesn't really matter.

I want to believe it was just a coincidence that the girl in Sena's eroge looked like Kobato.

Translation Notes:

1. ↑ Homoge is short for homo game, similar to eroge being short for erotic game.

Sister

It was after school, three days before our final exams.

From now until the end of the exams, most clubs were on break, and every student was busy studying for their tests.

Even the Neighbors Club, that had no real set activities to begin with, was no exception, as I sat in the library studying until dusk.

...By the way,

Our school, St. Chronica Academy, is as you'd guess from the name, a missionary school. Hence, it's a Christian school, and has several sisters from the church working here as faculty members.

They teach theology and ethics classes, act as counselors for students, hold mass as well as other religious events, and apparently do a whole bunch of other things too, but I don't really know that much.

I didn't pick theology or ethics in my electives, and I transferred in right in the middle of my junior year, so I've never participated in any events either. Even if I do happen to run into one of the sisters, I generally think of them as having basically nothing to do with me.

Aside from Maria Takayama, the silver haired little girl working as the advisor for the Neighbors Club that is.

As for why I just started talking about sisters all of a sudden, that would be because I just walked past one.

A sister, a sister that wasn't Maria, who I thought had nothing to do with me.

St. Chronica Academy's campus is pretty big, and has a long stone paved path from the gates to the school building itself, with benches here and there that you usually see normals eating their lunches on.

There was a lone sister sitting on one of the benches.

She was completely slouching on it, with both her legs spread wide open and her head tilted back looking up at the sky.

There was a can of cola in her right hand.

She's a pretty big slob for a sister... is what I thought to myself as I began to make my way past her.

However, at the exact moment,

Burp.

Describing it with just "burp" seems a bit off. I think an onomatopoeia like "Goeh!" or "Egyuh!" would've been more fitting , but, anyway, it was a giant burp, just as I'd described it. And it was a sister's burp.

...W-well, sisters are human too. It's normal for them to burp after drinking some cola like everybody else! Even Maria has to take a dump after she eats her potato chips!

I started to walk faster as I desperately tried to stop my vaguely sacred image of a sister from crumbling any further.

But, right as I did,

"Ah~ Hey you lost little lamb over there, holdGEFUHon."

She didn't seem to have much motivation as she talked to me. (That "GEFUH" was her burping, and I'm pretty sure she was trying to say "hold on").

Having her call me a lost little lamb kinda bugged me, but I just kept on walking.

"Hey now~ Don't ignore me little lamb. I am one in the service of God ya' know~ Turning your back on me is, uh, you know, like being a sinner who's turned his back on God."

She sure thinks highly of herself...

I turned around to look at her, and our eyes met dead-on.

She was looking at me.

I looked behind me, but, as usual, there wasn't a single person near me.

"...Umm... Are you talking to me?" I reluctantly asked.

"Yep, of cock. Oops, I mean of course, buhaha!"

The sister burst into laughter from her own dirty joke.

Kh, she's got a huge weirdo aura (if this were "Dragon Boy" it'd be in terms of power level)...!

She might even be a match for the rest of the Neighbors Club.

While reeling in shock form her aura, I took a good look at her —— It felt like I might start ogling her any minute if I didn't stop.

There was an amazingly beautiful girl in front of me.

She was pretty young too—— I think she might even be the same age as me.

Her silver hair shone in the dusk sunlight.

As did her clear blue eyes.

She was right between "cute" and "beautiful", and her face was so sublime it was like the embodiment of the ideal face for a teenage girl.

She was wearing a sister outfit of course, but you could easily tell she had a beautiful pair of legs, a thin waist, and just the right size boobs.

She looked like she was from Northern Europe, the same as Maria. Actually, I think Maria might end up looking like this miracle super-dreadnought class pretty girl in another 7 years or so.

"Ah~ **Time to move these old bones."**

She acted like it was a pain to get up off the bench, and walked over towards me.

How can a girl this pretty—— No, even if she wasn't pretty, that's not something someone so young should be saying!

I swear I started feeling dizzy just being near her.

"Haa... Do you need something from me?"

"'Bout that~ S'like you've got somethin' you're worried about. I'm a sister and all, so it's my job to help students with their worries, ya' know?"

Said the sister as she **scratched her ass.**

"Worries...? Well, I guess I can't say I don't have any."

Our final exams, the thing with Yozora, the thing with Sena, the thing with Yukimura, the thing with Rika, the thing with Kobato, how to get rid of that rubber thing Stella gave me, the weirdo standing in front of me, etc.

How I can't make any friends.

"Yep yep, I so get it~ Lots of stuff happens in life, doesn't it~ Painful things, sad things, etc. I can totally understand why you strayed from the right path~"

"......Um, if you're talking about my hair, it's natural."

I said to the sister who was half-acting like an old man.

"Eh, it's natural?"

"Yes."

"I see~ So that's your natural hair..."

"....."

After a brief awkward silence,

"Well, lots of stuff happens in life, doesn't it~"

Said the sister, trying to change the subject.

She then sighed as if she were disappointed for some reason.

"I thought I'd finally found somebody with a pretty good rockin ' feel to them in this school full of prim and proper rich boys and girls too~"

"You make it sound like it would've been better if this wasn't natural and I actually *was* a yankee..."

I said, feeling a little taken aback, which was followed by the sister affirming my suspicions like it was nothing.

"Hm~ It's probably 'cause 'm the kind of person who thinks young people should be more rockin' rather than be obedient little lambs~"

"Can a member of the clergy really say that?"

I let a tiny sarcastic laugh leak out.

The girl's eyes narrowed after I did.

"The main idea behind rock and roll is to fight the system. Even Christianity started by rebelling against the ideas of the time~ I don't think it's really all that weird."

"Really?"

"Yeah. It started with them going 'No, the way *you* do things is weird.' and opposing the main sect of Judaism. Then, little Jesus of Nazareth created his own sect of Judaism called the Jesus sect. After that, it started to get called Christianity instead~"

She just called Christ "little Jesus"...

I don't know about any other sisters besides Maria, but even I can tell that the one in front of me is a weirdo.

"That's how it all started, which means that Christianity isn't really a religion based on being obedient girls and boys at all. It

was more of an extreme rock group than anything. Back in those days, you'd get done in if you didn't resist, so it's only natural it turned out the way it did."

"Oh...?"

"You know about that famous 'If you're hit on the right cheek, then offer them the other' thing right? That wasn't originally some lame 'violence is bad' message, but was actually meant to say 'Even if you can't physically resist violence against you, never give in' and mock your enemy with as if to say 'That it? I've still got another cheek here.' while facing them head on.' That's the general feeling it used to have, apparently."

"Little Jesus really was a rockin' guy, wasn't he?"

"You know it! He was totally awesome!"

The sister showed me a tender smile.

"But, well, even though I say that, I do think that the peace and harmony the priests advocate is good. It's not like I support violence or war though, and I don't think constantly trying to rebel against society is a good thing either. It's just, I don't think there's any need to always be an obedient little sheep is all."

"...I see."

I gave a meek nod in return.

I didn't really want anything to do with her when she called out to me at first, but that was a pretty interesting story.

I kinda wish I would've taken some theology or ethics classes if people like her were teaching them.

The sister took another sip of her cola. She must've gotten thirsty after all that talking.

"Glug glug..... BURP."

After comfortably letting out another burp, a friendly smile rose to the pretty sister's face as she said,

"Sorry for stopping you and all~ I guess people like to give sermons the older they get."

How old are you anyway...?

"...No, I'm glad I got to hear about it."

"Really? Well, if you've ever got any worries come down to the student consultation room. I'm usually just lazing around doing nothing in there~"

Said the sister before starting to walk towards the school building. While scratching her ass.

She had a, how to put it, aloof feel to her.

If she was a solemn old man that attitude would fit her perfectly , no doubt about it.

"What the heck is up with just 'lazing around' anyway?"

I said with a wry smile on my face.

"Oh, right, do you mind telling me your name?"

I called out to the sister, who then turned around, and said with a gentle smile,

"Kate Takayama. Some students just call me Kate or Mother Kate too."

...Kate Takayama, a sister.

Takayama..... Takayama?

Right as I realized why that name sounded so familiar,

"Oniiiiiiiichaaaaaann! Ahaha, it's Onii-chan~~! Onii-chan is here , ahahahaha!"

On the grass hill beside the stone path (you can see the chapel over it) was one tiny sister charging at me completely unconcerned with what people might think of her.

It was Maria—— Maria *Takayama*

"Ahaha, I got to meet Onii-chan even though we don't have club today, ahahaha! Uohh! Why why!? This is awesome! Meeting Onii-chan is awesome!"

I rubbed Maria's head like usual, unsure of why she was acting so hyper.

Maria looked up at me with a happy face, and said,

"Hey~ Hey~ Today's lunch was super good! I got an omelet! It was super tasty! Why was it so good!?"

By the way, I always make Maria's lunches on days I go to school.

"Did you like the way I made it sweeter than usual?"

"Yeah! You did very good work! Banzai~! Banzai~! Banzai~!"

Maria happily replied, full of energy.

But, yeah, having someone enjoy the food you made this much is all you could ever ask for.

The omelet I made today was a bit too sweet for me personally, but Kobato said she liked it too, so I think I'll start adding that flavor to more of our stuff.

"Making an omelet sweet is like a miracle, ahaha! Onii-chan, are you the messiah!? You're awesome!"

"No, it's not that big of a..."

I gave a strained smile to Maria, who was staring at me with eyes that were probably shining as much as the eyes of the people who saw the miracles of Christ 2,000 years ago were.

"Oh, right. Hey Maria, about this person here——"

I directed my gaze at the sister—— Kate Takayama.

"Hmm~?"

Apparently Maria hadn't noticed Kate-sensei was there until just now.

"Gyahhhhh!?"

Maria screamed, and ran around behind me, hiding from Kate-sensei.

"W-w-w-w-why is the old hag with Onii-chan!?"

"So you do know her."

I've heard Maria mention Mother Kate before.

According to her, she's "Like my boss I guess. She's a super scary old hag."

I hardly think "old hag" fits a girl as young as her, but then again, you *do* see little kids acting like middle and high schoolers are way older than they actually are.

Who'd have thought they had the same last name too...?

"Whoooo arrrrree youuuu calllinnng an old hag, huhhhhhh!?"

"Gyahhhhh!?"

Kate-sensei's fearsome voice had Maria hiding even farther behind me, but that didn't stop her from giving Maria a noogie on both sides of her head.

Mom used to do that to me sometimes too, and man, I know that actually hurts quite a bit...

"Fungyahhh! Ouch, it hurts! Stop it! Go die you poopy old hag!!"

A brutal smile rose on Kate-sensei's face as Maria spewed words unbecoming of a sister.

"I told you I'm not an old hag, didn't I? I'm 'Onee-sama', isn't that right?"

"Shut up, poopy crap old hag!"

"Poop and crap are the same thing~ Poopy crap Maria."

"Owwww! Shut up! Die poopy old hag!"

Kate-sensei put more power into her fists, and Maria's screams got louder.

And honestly, hearing two fairy-like pretty young girls like them go on about poop and crap really does not fit them at all...

"Go on, say it. O. Ne. E. Sa. Ma."

"Ghh... Y-you poopy old hag!"

"I'm an old hag, so I didn't quite catch that~ I can't hold back either, since I'm an old hag."

"Ugyahhh! It hurts, it hurts, I'm sorry, I was wrong Hag-sama!"

"Still won't give up, you little brat!?"

"Owwwwwwwww~~ Forgive me, Onee-sama!"

Kate-sensei finally stopped after Maria apologized with tears in her eyes.

Right after, Kate-sensei directed her gaze at me.

"By the way, might you be Kodaka Hasegawa?"

"Ah, yes!"

I answered in a slightly nervous tone of voice.

"I see~ Maria's always talking about you. Guess you've been taking care of my stupid little sister."

"Ah, no, Maria-sensei is always helping me out too..."

I can't really say Maria has done much for me, but it is true that she's the Neighbors Club's advisor, and she got us a clubroom.

"Wait, your little sister!?"

"Yeah. I'm Maria's Onee-sama."

"Hmph! You're just a poopy old hag, you poopy old hag!"

Thud.

Kate-sensei drove a fist into Maria's head without even looking over at her.

"Fgyah!"

...Maria's sister, is it?

They do both have the last name Takayama, and that silver hair, those blue eyes, and their faces - all look really similar too.

There's no particular reason to doubt that they're sisters, but I was a little surprised, since Maria felt more like an only child to me .

"Hah hah, but now I get it~ So you're the famous Kodaka Onii-chan, huh?"

Kate-sensei happily said, as though she was praising me.

"Well, as you can see, she's a stupid little sister, but take care of her for me, ok Kodaka?"

"Hmph! Onii-chan would do it even if you didn't ask him to, old hag!"

Maria snuck away while Kate-sensei wasn't looking, and stuck her tongue out at her while pulling one eyelid down before dashing off as fast as the wind.

"Make sure you do your work when you get back to the chapel~ "

"Don't wanna!"

Maria gave an honest reply before starting to run away again.

"I swear, that girl..."

A bitter smile rose to Kate-sensei's face as she scratched her ass.

She then put one hand on her waist and chugged the rest of her cola.

"Sheesh, why did she turn into such a stupid girl? You *Burp* know what I mean?"

Seeing as how there was no way I could call Maria an idiot in front of her sister, I was left no option but to tilt my head to the side slightly and offer her a forced smile.

"But, well, you... you guys have my thanks."

I was a little bewildered as to why she thanked me all of a sudden.

"You... guys?"

"Yeah, what was it? The Neighbors Club or somethin'? Maria's been a lot more energetic ever since she started being your advisor. "

"Really? I can't imagine her *not* being energetic..."

I said, thinking back on when Maria wasn't so attached to me.

Kate-sensei shook her head.

"It's like, for better or worse, she's gotten more childish. That idiot's been good at studying ever since she was born, and the priests expected a lot from her, so they had her go to a pretty famous elementary school~ She was an idiot who couldn't do anything other than study, so she'd always act conceited and look down on the other kids. It got even worse when she skipped grades in elementary school and realized she was smart enough to go to high school already..."

Kate-sensei said with a distant look in her eyes.

"Kodaka, in an elite high school full of... prideful kids, what do you think would happen if you threw an annoying little runt who mocks people and is smarter than everyone else in there with them ?" ...I pictured it in my head.

Unfortunately, it wasn't a very happy scene.

"Anyway, you can probably guess the gist of what happened. Embarrassingly, that was when I, as well as the rest of the adults around Maria, finally realized there were more important things she needed to learn."

I wasn't able to say anything in return to Kate-sensei's sad smile .

"And, well, that's why, I can't possibly thank your little sister—— the 'Poop Vampire' was it?—— enough. Yozora Mikadzuki too; I'm especially thankful to her."

"Yozora?"

I thought that was a little strange.

I can't think of any real relationship those two have aside from when Yozora teases her by turning into evil horse demons and pretty boys.

"In the past, I was hesitant when it came to interacting with Maria. However, Yozora took Maria and dragged her outside of her shell without so much as a hint of hesitation, mercy, or consideration. I think that's what Maria really needed. She's the first person who Maria's 'Good at studying' card doesn't work on at all."

Now that's surprising.

I thought Yozora was really overdoing it when she used violence to force Maria into acting as the Neighbors Club's advisor, but apparently that was actually the right thing to do.

"Although, I do think she goes a little too far sometimes~ Do you think it's ok to make a little girl run outside naked?"

"I-I'm sorry... I'll be more careful in the future."

I reflexively apologized to Kate-sensei, who seemed to be scolding me.

"Anyways, look out for her from now on, ok? Onii-chan."

"Ah, ok... wait, Onii-chan?"

Kate-sensei gave a mischievous smile in return to my confusion.

"You're a junior, right, Onii-chan? I'm still only 15~ So if you're Maria's Onii-chan, that makes you my Onii-chan too, doesn't it?"

"That does make sense... wait, what!?"

I just stood there, bewildered, as Kate-sensei waved at me and said, "Bye bye, Onii-chan!" before happily walking off.

Pbttt!

A sound such as the one above echoed towards me from behind Kate-sensei.

My intuition told me that identifying this sound is something I absolutely should not do.

"Woops, **I farted**. Ah hah hah!"

...She just cut the last thread tying her to the words "pretty girl".

As I watched her beautiful form (she was scratching her ass again though) move away from me, I thought about how I didn't really want a little sister who farts in front of others like it's nothing.

Comparing Answers

At last, the four days of final exams had come to an end.

I'd have exams for two to four classes in the mornings, and then go home and study for the next day's tests, so there's not much to say about it.

As for how the tests went, they were about how I expected.

There were more difficult subjects than I'd anticipated, but I don't think I failed anything.

Anyway, I made my way to the Neighbors Club clubroom along with a feeling of liberation.

We had tests today too, but only for two subjects, so it was still only 11 in the morning.

Yozora was walking with me.

She said we might as well kill time in the clubroom until lunch, and I went along with her.

We hardly got to, or rather, didn't get to see each other at all while the tests were being held, so it was kind of nice being able to walk to the clubroom with Yozora like this again.

"By the way, Kodaka."

Yozora called out to me all of a sudden.

"Hm?"

"Rumor has it that people with friends do this thing called ' comparing answers' after a test is over."

"Yeah, I've heard that some people do that."

Comparing answers, aka, a ritual seen following the conclusion of a test.

It's when friends get together and go "What did you put for question number two?" "I just put *** for that one, think that's right ?" or something like that.

If you put the same answer as your friends then everyone's happy, but get worried if you put different ones, and sometimes you bet juice to see who was right...

Yozora had an upset look on her face as she said,

"What an utterly pointless thing to do. It's not like you know if you had the right answer or not just because yours match. It's best to just forget about it until it gets graded and returned to you. It's obviously more productive to spend time focusing on the next test, rather than worrying about the one that's already over."

"That's exactly right!"

And, of course, I simply glanced at my fellow classmates comparing answers while preparing for the next test in silence just like I did with all the other tests.

That's the right way to spend your time after a test...

There's no point in comparing answers with your friends...

""Haa....."

We both let out a deep sigh.

"...I can't understand those normals... But, well, Kodaka,"

Yozora said, in a strangely nervous voice.

"Hm?"

"After we make some friends in the future, we might have to spend our break time comparing answers, even if we know it's pointless."

"Yeah, we might."

"Yeah, so let's compare answers to practice for that."

"...Yeah, ok."

I obediently went along with yet another one of Yozora's weird ideas.

...Ok, yes, I was actually incredibly jealous of everyone else having fun comparing answers with each other.

I wonder if I can be like them one day...

"Ok, then let's compare our answers for question four on part three of our Math II test."

Yozora said, looking a little happy.

"Ok, umm, question four on part three of Math II——"

I tried to remember the problem, but,

"......Uh, which one was that again? And why ask about Math II now? I don't remember the questions or my answers for that."

Our Math II test was on the first day of finals, and I can't remember the actual question with just the number.

It'd be nice if I had the question sheet with me, but who'd bring the question sheet for a test they did on a different day with them?

"That was the problem I was most worried about. You don't remember it?"

"I don't think so... what kind of problem was it?"

"It was a proof worth 15 points."

"Oh yeah, now that you mention it, I do remember there being a really hard one on the back. I wrote a lot for it, but I doubt I was right... No, wait, even if I could remember everything that I wrote, don't you think comparing answers on something as complicated as a math proof is a little too stiff for some simple chit-chat? I'd get totally lost after 2 minutes of talking about it."

Computing all those formulas with mental math is impossible for me.

"Hrm... you might be right... It might be more suitable to say ' That was a hard one~' or 'I'm pretty sure I got that one right.' about a math problem that's hard to talk about when comparing answers ... Ok, in that case,"

Yozora made a tiny nod, and then said,

"...Oh noo~ that problem was so hard, wasn't it!?"

In an obviously forced tone of voice.

"...Y-yeah. I don't remember it well, but it was pretty hard, wasn't it?"

"....."

"....."

Our conversation hit a dead end.

"......Forget about that problem. Let's compare answers on something else."

Yozora said, her cheeks a light shade of red.

"...Umm, then let's go with a multiple choice or fill in the blank question next. Preferably one we did today."

"Ok... Let's see... A problem I had trouble with today... how about number 11 on part two of Japanese history?"

"Come on, I don't remember which question was which number ! Give me a second."

I yelled, and started fishing through my bag.

We had our Japanese history test today, so I had the question sheet with me.

"Umm, number 11 on part two..."

I took the sheet out, and looked for the question Yozora mentioned.

Part two was fill in the blanks where you had to write in the correct year or person.

Number 11 reads,

After Tokimune Houjou's death, his vassal (11) overthrew Yasumori Adachi, and came into power. This is called the (12) Incident.

"Oh, this is 'Yoritsuna Taira' isn't it? I'm pretty sure that's right," I said.

"Hrm..." mumbled Yozora, making a difficult expression on her face.

I'm pretty sure Yoritsuna Taira is right... By the way, number 12 is "Shimotsuki"

I'm a little surprised Yozora is worried about a relatively simple question like this one.

"Want me to grab my textbook?"

You can always just look in the book for answers to history questions.

"Yeah, please do," said Yozora as she nodded, so I opened up the book to the page the Shimotsuki Incident was on.

"Yep, see? It's Taira."

Yozora peeked at the book, and frowned while mumbling " Hrmm..." again.

"Yozora, are you bad at history or something?"

"That's not it. I obviously know that the answer to 11 is Yoritsuna Taira, but... I might have written the wrong kanji for the last part of his name..."

"Who cares about that!!"

I said by reflex, to which Yozora pursed her lips, and said,

"Hmm... I wonder if I did it right. I think I might have written 網 instead of ... I got all worried over which was "tsuna" and which was "ami" in the middle of the test..."

"That's such a stupid mistake..."

I tried imagining the kanji for "tsuna" in my head.

.....網... ... ...?

"W-wait, huh? Now I don't know which is which either!!"

Yozora then make a sadistic smile.

"Hmph... Kodaka, are you sure you didn't write 平 on your test? "

"Uwa, crap, wait... 網.....!?"

I double checked that 網 was written in the book, and traced it out in the air several times, but I couldn't shake away my unease.

"Uwa, crap, now you've got me nervous! I'm pretty sure I wrote 網... I think. It doesn't have the curvy part at the bottom, right...?"

"Now then... I wonder about that...?"

"Kh――"

I never thought I'd get nervous about something I was so confident about just by comparing answers...!

Comparing answers is not to be taken lightly...

"Anyway, time for the next question."

Yozora said with a grin on her face as she watched me sweating bullets.

"Number 18 on part two."

"Umm..."

I looked at question 18 on part two.

In the first year of the Shouchuu era, (18), Emperor Go-Daigo (omitted)

"Oh, this one. I just put in something random..."

I'm pretty bad with memorizing years...

As that thought crossed my mind,

"1324!"

It was none other than Sena who had shoved her way between Yozora and I before shouting out her own answer, full of confidence.

"...Tch." Yozora made an obviously irritated face.

"Whatcha up to? Comparing answers?"

"Yeah."

I nodded to Sena, who asked in a happy tone of voice.

"Then I'll let you compare with me too! You're pretty lucky to get to compare answers with me, considering mine are all correct!"

"We don't need you. Get lost."

"Why not!? Let me compare answers too!"

Sena looked like she was about to cry after receiving Yozora's typical cold attitude.

"Hmph... then number five on part three of Math II."

Yozora threw out a question number, most likely at random.

"Umm... $4\sqrt{5}$?"

Yozora's face twitched after hearing her answer so easily.

It goes without saying that I don't know if she's right or not, since I don't even remember the question.

How do these two manage to remember all the numbers like that...

"...Number three on part one of classical literature."

"Hmm... irregular conjugation of 'suru' verbs?"

"Eh? That one was conjugation of godan ver..... Tch..."

Yozora stopped mid-sentence, and clicked her tongue after a two second pause.

Looks like she realized Sena was right and she was wrong.

...After that, Sena continued to spit out the (I think) correct answers to every question Yozora asked.

There weren't many questions Yozora wasn't sure on, so she ran out pretty quick.

"Hey, come on, what's the next one~?"

"....."

Sena seemed to be enjoying things, and it was obvious to anyone who looked at Yozora that she was pissed off to the max.

".....I'm done. I knew comparing answers was a waste of time. It's not like it'll change my grade either."

Yozora said, as if pouting, before starting to walk off.

Just now, was that... her trying to avoid admitting she lost...?

"Eh? H-hold on, Yozora!"

Sena chased after Yozora.

"Ask me another question, come on! It can be as hard as you want!"

"Shut up Meat, you're annoying."

"You don't have to hold back, I know you want to compare more answers!"

"I'm fine. It's not fun to compare answers with you anyway."

"Wha- Don't say the same thing that Yamamoto who sat next to me in 8th grade did!"

すれ違う二人

「問題出してよ問題!
どんだけ難しいやつでもいいから!」

「いい。貴様と答え合わせしても
楽しくない」

「ちょっ、
中二のときの隣の席の山本さんと
同じこと言わないでよ!」

Yozora and Sena kept walking, continuing their loud argument.

"Hmph, if I have to compare answers with you, I'd rather go with Tomo-chan. Hey, Tomo-chan, what'd you write for number 7 on part two of biology?"

"Hey! Don't start talking to yourself, compare answers with me! Ah, the answer to that one was the Calvin-Benson Cycle!"

"Eh? You want me to tell you my answer first? Let's see, I think I wrote the Calvin-Benson Cycle. Ohh, you wrote that too, Tomo-chan? That's a relief, hahaha."

"Listen to me!"

Sena kept chasing after Yozora, half in tears.

...Sena actually managed to corner Yozora. That is to say, she won for once, but sadly, she didn't realize it.

Sisters

It was the day after our final exams had ended.

It was a weekday, but that didn't stop me from sleeping in until noon, and after eating lunch I spent my afternoon reading manga and playing video games in my room.

The way Chronica Academy works, is that after final exams we get the last five days of September off to recuperate.

I'm guessing the teachers are pretty busy grading tests, because they didn't give out homework like they did for summer vacation.

In other words, this was a true break from school.

I've spent the past few days completely focused on my tests, so I doubt anyone can complain if I take a day or two to just laze around and relax.

I sent a text out to everyone in the Neighbors Club letting them know I'd be staying home today.

By the way, Chronica Academy's middle school division and high school division have tests on the same days, so Kobato was with me here at home too.

I got so lost in my lazing around that it was almost dinner time before I knew it.

I felt a little bad that I spent the day doing basically nothing, even though I'd already told myself it wasn't a big deal.

I figured if I was this lazy all day, I might as well at least put some effort into dinner. So, I went out to the grocery store to buy some things to make dinner with, and was now standing in the kitchen.

I managed to find some chicken meat on sale today, so I guess we'll have that.

"Kukuku... I smell the aroma of some truly delectable blood in here..."

A short while after I'd started cooking, Kobato came into the kitchen with a string of drool hanging down her mouth, most likely lured in by the smell of the chicken being fried.

"I'm almost done with it, today's is gonna be good."

"Kukuku... I await an offering befitting one of my status..."

Kobato did that ridiculous chuckle again.

And, right after she did,

Ring ring ri~ng Ring ring ri~ng.

The intercom started ringing.

I wonder who it is.

"Hey, Kobato, go get the door for me. If it's someone asking us to subscribe to some newspaper just tell them we don't need it, ok? "

I had to ask Kobato since I can't just leave this chicken sitting here.

"Kukuku... It is no trouble at all to handle something of that level with great magic such as my own, kukuku..."

"Yeah, I dunno if you'll need magic or whatever, but just send them away."

"Ok."

In the time it took Kobato to head over to our side of the intercom, it rang three more times in rapid succession.

People really like to be annoying with doorbells, don't they...

As I thought that to myself and continued cooking, I heard Kobato yell,

"No thank you!"

Really loudly into the receiver.

So it was just a salesman?

However, he must not have wanted to give up, because a second later,

"No thank you!"

I heard Kobato yell the same thing again.

It's best if you can cut these guys off right away, but this guy must be persistent...

"No thank you!..... No thank you!..... No thank you no thank you!"

"Are you deaf!? I said we don't want you here! Now go away!"

What the heck is she doing...

I went to look over at Kobato to see what was going on, and when I did,

"You moronnnnn!"

Kobato yelled into the receiver again all of a sudden, hung up in a hurry, and ran over to the front door.

"Hey, ehh!? H-hey! Kobato!?"

Going out there in person is just what he wants you to do!

I had no choice but to quickly turn off the stove, and chase after Kobato.

"Ah! Onii-chan!!"

When I arrived at the front door, Maria, who Kobato was trying to hold back, slipped past her, took off her shoes, and jumped at me.

"Maria!?"

"Ahaha, Onii-chan! Onii-chan's here! Ahaha!"

W-why is Maria!?

"Uuu, An-chan... I told her 'no thank you'! She came in even though I told her 'no thank you'! What kind of idiot comes in after you say you don't want them here..."

Kobato looked like she was about to cry.

Looks like Maria was the one Kobato was yelling at over the phone.

"...Hey, Maria, why are you at our house?"

I asked, still confused by the whole situation, to which Maria energetically replied,

"I **ran away from all my material possessions!**"

Material possessions? Does that mean she just joined the priesthood?

Or maybe she meant she's changing religions to Buddhism now...?

"Be more specific, what do you mean?"

"I mean I **ran away from home!**"

"Just say so in the first place then... Wait, you ran away from home!?"

"Yeah!"

Maria nodded with a big smile on her face.

"Why would you run away from home..."

"Because the old hag never shuts up about work!"

"The old hag... Oh, Kate-sensei?"

"Yeah! I told her Onii-chan wouldn't be a jerk and make me work all the time, and she told me 'Go and live with your precious Onii-chan then!'"

"...And you actually did."

"Yeah!"

What an honest answer.

Maria stared at me with sparkling eyes full of so much faith in me that she didn't think I'd ever turn her down.

But I can't go and let her just live here...

As I was deciding what to do, the phone started ringing.

"......Uhh, wait here a second."

I went back into the living room, leaving Maria and Kobato where they were.

I then picked up the receiver.

"Yo, it's me man. You know, me."

I thought about hanging up immediately, but stopped because I recognized that voice.

It was just the person I needed to talk to.

"If you don't mind, could you please stop with the stupid jokes, Kate-sensei?"

"Oh, ding dong~ It's Onii-chan's little sister, Kate-chan here~ Oh, you don't have to be so stiff with me either~ Talk to me like you'd talk to your little sister!"

It was Sister Kate on the other end of the line, aka, the person who told Maria "Go and live with your precious Onii-chan then!"

"Fine."

I decided to ignore the part about talking to her like a little sister, but it was clear I didn't have to talk to her like a teacher either.

She might talk like a weird old man, but she is technically younger than me.

"Anyway, more importantly, Maria came over to our house."

"Yeah, I know~"

"The heck, you knew? What do you wanna do then?" I asked.

"I'd like it if you could let her stay there a day or two. If she's too much of a pain you can just throw her out though~"

"She wouldn't really be a..."

Pain, is what I was about to say, but then I heard her and Kobato yelling back and forth at the front door.

"You sure she won't be a pain?"

"...Well, I don't see the problem in letting her stay while we're on break."

"Thanks Onii-chan! I love you!"

"Shut up."

Ca-lick.

Anyway, that's how Maria ended up staying at our house.

I finished making dinner about 30 minutes after Maria arrived.

Uohhhhhhh~~!!

Maria let out a shout of joy with her eyes bugged out after she saw me line the food up on the table.

As she frantically looked back and forth between me and the food, she said,

"Why!? Why why why!? Ehhhh!? Whyyy!? Wh- Wh- Why why!? Uohh!?"

I don't know why she keeps asking "why!?", but she certainly seems to be excited.

"...Shut up, stop saying 'why' you moron."

Kobato said as she sat in her chair with a frown on her face.

Our table was a long one, but it was a little tight since all three of us were sitting on the same side (Maria was on my right, and Kobato on my left).

Kobato usually sits across from me, but she brought her chair all the way around once she saw Maria sit down next to me.

By the way, tonight's dinner consists of chicken patties, fried chicken, chicken rice, and chicken salad.

As I said before, I got a lot of chicken meat for cheap, so I based dinner around that.

The demi-glace sauce on the patties is a secret weapon I developed over the years, but I think they'd be good even without the sauce, and it goes good with either bread or rice too.

I was thinking we could just eat the leftovers tomorrow, but now that Maria's here it should be just enough for three people.

"Ahaha! Why is there so much here!? Is it Christmas!? Onii-chan , is today Christmas!?"

Maria said while her eyes darted around, looking at all the food lined up on the table.

"How could it be Christmas in September?"

I did put more effort than usually into dinner tonight, but it's not *that* special.

"This much and it's not even Christmas!? Uwahh, why why why!?"

"Hmph... What an irritating pawn of God... This is exactly why you commoners are so troublesome..."

Kobato glanced over at Maria before she picked up her chopsticks and started to reach out for some food.

"Heyyy!"

"Fgyah!?"

Maria reached out all of a sudden and smacked the back of Kobato's hand.

"Wh... what'd you do that for ya' retard!?"

"We have to pray before we eat dinner!"

Maria said something very sister-like for once.

"Kukuku... We are a clan of the darkness... We do not pray to something as trifling as God..."

"Kobato. Not praying is fine, but say 'thanks for the food' like you're supposed to."

"Uu~"

Kobato pursed her lips at my scolding, and mumbled "...thanks for the food," before sticking her chopsticks out to grab a piece of fried chicken.

"Ehe~"

The second she took a bite of it, that frown she'd had on her face this whole time melted into a happy smile in an instant.

She finished it off in no time at all, and reached out for another one.

"Ah! That's not fair! Let us pray. Bless us, O Lord, and these, Your gifts, which we are about to receive from——"

"Munch munch munch munch"

Kobato devoured the fried chicken as Maria offered her prayers.

And the second Kobato stuck her chopsticks out for the piece right in front of Maria's eyes,

"Gyahhh poop Amen!"

Maria cut herself off mid-prayer, quickly stuck her chopsticks into a piece of the fried chicken, and shoved it into her mouth.

"Uhoooo! Sho goood!"

Maria happily yelled with her mouth full of fried chicken.

"Ya' didn't even finish your prayer!" Kobato complained.

Then, as she grabbed a new piece of fried chicken, Maria said,

"I-it's fine! I'm saving the poor fried chicken from getting taken by an evil vampire!"

"Ya' big cheater!"

"I'm not cheating~!"

Thus, they began devouring dinner like it was some kind of competition.

The fried chicken were disappearing before my eyes, and they were eating the salad pretty fast too.

As for the chicken rice, rather than scoop some onto their plates like a normal person, they were hovering over the big plate it was on, practically butting heads as they ate.

I'd put a chicken patty on each of our plates, but for some reason they ended up stealing each other's rather than eating their own.

It looked like I wasn't going to get to eat at all at this rate, so I quickly said my 'thanks for the food' before securing some chicken rice and fried chicken on my plate.

But, as I did, the living room phone rang.

After telling Kobato and Maria, "Hey, you two, mind your manners while you eat," I stood up and went to grab the receiver.

"Haa haa... O-Onii-chan, what color underwear are you wearing right now?"

"Just tell me what you want."

I coldly said, since I didn't have the time to go along with her stupid jokes. It was Sister Kate who'd called again.

"Ah, well, it's nothing big really~ Did you guys already eat?"

"Yeah, we're actually eating right now."

I answered, while glancing into the dining room. I really need to get back to the table before those two little beasts eat everything.

"Oh, would you mind telling me what you're having?"

"What we're having? Umm... Fried chicken, chicken patties... chicken rice, and chicken salad."

"I see. Make sure you tell Maria to eat her vegetables too, ok? Onii-chan."

"Sure."

I then hung up the phone.

Looks like it really wasn't anything big after all.

...By the time I'd hung up the phone and returned to the table, the fried chicken had already been annihilated.

Even the pieces I'd put on my plate were gone.

"...Who ate my fried chicken?"

""She ate it!""

All I could do was sigh at the two of them, pointing at each other with their mouths full of food like two little hamsters.

After we finished eating, Maria kept on following me around as I washed everything, looking all around the kitchen and dining room.

"Hey, Maria, you having fun?"

I asked, a little curious, to which Maria replied "Yeah, this is fun !" with a big fat smile on her face.

Well, if she says it's fun then I don't really mind, so I continued washing the dishes.

"Oh yeah, Maria, how'd you know where I live? Actually, how'd you even get here?"

I asked, realizing how weird it was that she made it here.

It's pretty far from our house to St. Chronica Academy. I have to ride the train and the bus to get there. I don't think a 10 year old little girl could find her way out here that easily.

"I rode the train and the bus!"

Maria answered, full of energy.

"Oh...? I'm impressed. You didn't get on the wrong bus or anything?"

...Incidentally, there's a guy who got on the wrong bus and was late the first day in this very room.

"It was fine, since the old hag came with me!"

"...That's quite the original way to run away from home."

What kind of runaway leaves with somebody from the same house they're running away from...?

Just then, the phone rang a third time.

I turned off the faucet, and walked into the living room.

The caller was Kate, yet again.

"You guys done eating now?"

"Yeah."

"Did that little weasel eat her vegetables?"

"She chomped 'em up."

She ate the salad, the meat, the rice, and my food too.

"I see~ That's fine then. Talk to ya' later~"

She hung up.

I don't get why she keeps incessantly calling me to check up on Maria when she's the one who brought her here in the first place.

By the way, Maria was looking up at me the whole time I was on the phone just now.

She kept following me around, even after I went back into the kitchen.

I finished the dishes while thinking that having her follow me around like a little puppy was kind of fun.

Right after I was all done with that,

"Kukuku... Fellow clansman... You shall join me in my merrymaking..."

Kobato, who had been watching TV, said to me after walking into kitchen.

She was holding the case for one of her video games in her hand .

"What, you wanna play some games together?"

Kobato nodded at my question.

"OK, that's fine with me."

I didn't do anything else today, and it'd be nice to play some video games with Kobato too, since I haven't in a while.

"Yay! ...Kukuku... Watch as I mystify you with my beautiful techniques..."

Kobato happily put the disc into the PS2, and started up the game.

The game was "Kurogane no Necromancer Magical Hyper Battle 3"—— It's the previous game in the series to the one I played at Sena's house.

"Kukuku... An-chan, you shall use controller two..."

Kobato handed me the controller, and sat on the sofa with her own.

After the company logo came the title screen filled with a bunch of different magical girls, along with the voice of one hyper-energetic girl saying "Kurogane Necromancer~! Magical Hyper Battle~!" as she read the title out loud.

"Ohh, I know about that! This is one of those eroge!"

Maria said while looking at the PS2 and TV.

"I-it's not an eroge!" Kobato said, blushing.

"It's not!?" said Maria, looking at me.

"Yeah, this is just a normal game. Where did you even hear about erog-..."

I stopped myself halfway because the answer was obvious.

"So this is different from the ones Sena and Rika are always playing in the clubroom?"

"They are. They're completely different."

"Oh!!"

"Wanna try it out, Maria?"

When I held out the controller to Maria, who was brimming with curiosity, she happily replied "Yeah!", before taking the controller from me and sitting down next to Kobato.

"Mu... No mere foolish human is fit to be my opponent..."

"What was that!? You don't know until you try!"

"Kukuku... Very well, then tremble in fear before my great powers of darkness..."

Kobato picked her character once the selection screen came up.

"Hmph, I'll beat you to a pulp with my holy power! Onii-chan, how do you use this thing!?"

Asked Maria, who seemed to have no knowledge whatsoever about video games, while staring at the controller curiously.

Kobato and Maria began their battle after I taught Maria the basics on how to play.

"Uohh!"

"Kukuku..."

.....

"K.O.! Perfect!"

As for the result, Maria was, naturally, annihilated by Kobato, who's been playing the game for a long time now.

Her opponent had never even held a controller before today, but that didn't stop Kobato from beating the crap out of Maria.

She's so childish, I swear...

"Fueh? I lost? Did I lose?"

"Kukuku... Behold my power..."

Kobato gleefully laughed at Maria, who was still confused.

"Ughh...! One more time!"

"The result will be the same no matter how many times you try... You would do well to lament your own weakness and fall into the depths of despair..."

Maria picked a different character, and Kobato met her with the same one as before.

I watched a few matches between Kobato and Maria (Kobato won them all) before leaving the living room and getting the bathtub ready.

"Hey~ Time to take a bath..."

"Kuhahaha, allow my special attack to send you into an eternity of darkness!"

"Gyahhh! That move's not fair!"

...They didn't look like they were gonna be done any time soon, so I took my bath first.

They were still going at it when I got back from my bath.

"Darkness Requiem!"

"Kyaaa!"

It looks like they just finished a match. Kobato's character, the Magical Girl of Darkness, Gernica, just fired a blast of magic at Maria's character, The Knight of Light, Carol, who let out a scream as she fell.

"Kukuku... yet another victory for me..."

"Grrr, I almost won too..."

Maria groaned in frustration at Kobato, who had just beaten her .

I looked at their HP bars, and saw that Kobato's was down to about half.

Ever since the first match that I saw, Kobato had been getting near-perfect wins every time, but it looks like Maria's been getting better while I was away.

Anyway, that aside,

"Hey~ It's time for you two to take a bath. Who wants to go first ?"

I said, causing Maria's eyes to open wide as she turned around.

"A bath!? Ok ok! I'll go! I'll go in with Onii-chan!"

"I already went in."

"Ohh... Then I'll go in next."

Maria said, putting down the controller, but Kobato stopped her.

"...Hold it... You would do well to know your place, pawn of God... It has been decided that I shall take my bath before the likes of you..."

"It was decided?" "No, it wasn't decided or anything," I said.

"Then I'll go in first after all! I'll go in before that vampire!"

"Ugahh! I'm going in first you retard!"

"...Decide with rock paper scissors."

I said, since it looked like they were about to get into a fight.

They both played rock paper scissors, and Maria won.

"Yay~! I get to use Onii-chan's bath~!"

Maria ran off to the bathroom while throwing her clothes off.

I picked up Maria's sister uniform and underwear she left spread on the floor, and as I was putting them in the changing room, I wondered,

"...Is it ok to put these in a washing machine like normal clothes ?"

I have no idea, since I've never washed a sister uniform before.

I left them in the laundry basket for now, and went back to the living room.

When I got back, the phone rang again.

I picked up the receiver, wondering if it was Kate again, and sure enough, it was.

"Ah, Onii-chan. What's Maria doing right now~?"

"She's taking a bath."

"I see~... alone?"

"Yeah."

"Tell her to make sure she washes everything. Also, do you have pajamas she can use?"

"She can use my little sister's."

"Oh, ok..."

She sounded a little disappointed.

"Are you that worried about her?"

"W-what!? I-it's not like I'm worried about her!"

Ca-lick.

Her voice was obviously flustered before she quickly hung up on me just now.

"Yeesh..."

I sighed while bringing Kobato's spare pajamas into the changing room.

I could hear Maria in the bath going "Hmmm~♪ Hmm Hm Hmmm~♪" happily humming some song.

"Maria! I left you a change of clothes in the basket out here! Oh, and make sure you wash everything!"

"Ok! Ahaha~!"

I went back to the living room after hearing her energetic reply.

Kobato was playing her game in single player mode, so I picked up the other controller to give her someone to play with.

I'm pretty sure I was able to put up a good fight back when we played before, but she must've gotten a lot better since then, because I ended up losing every match.

"...What's the matter, my clansman... That can't be your true power... Remember it... Remember how we fled through that frozen night together..."

Kobato said, looking a little disappointed.

...I think I'll do a little practice later.

As I told myself that and continued losing to Kobato,

"Hey~ Hey~ Onii-cha~n."

Maria came into the living room.

Naked.

She was holding Kobato's pajamas in her hand.

"What's the matter?"

I turned around, and then Maria said, with a troubled look on her face,

"Onii-chan, these are a little too tight!"

"Eh, tight?"

Those should fit Kobato though, so why...

"Yeah! ...It felt tight on my chest when I tried putting it on. I won't be able to sleep well in this."

"Then don't sleep at all! Moron moron moronnnn!"

Kobato started yelling all of a sudden.

"Ghhh..."

She was trembling in frustration with tears in the corners of her eyes.

Oh, I get it... Her chest...

Kobato and Maria are about the same size, so I figured Maria'd be able to wear whatever Kobato can, but Maria's chest is a little bigger than hers now that I think about it.

Well, this is a problem... If she can't wear Kobato's clothes then we don't have anything here that'll fit her.

"Hmm..... Wanna try wearing my T-shirt for now then?"

I can't let her get sick or something from being naked all night.

"Onii-chan's shirt!? I'll wear it!"

She didn't seem against it, so I grabbed one of my T-shirts and had Maria put it on.

Obviously, it was really baggy on her and looked more like a short one-piece, but,

"Uwaa! Onii-chan's T-shirt! Ahaha! Onii-chan's T-shirt~! I combined with Onii-chan! Ahahahaha!"

I don't know what's so great about my T-shirt, but Maria seems happy about it, so she can just wear that for tonight.

"Uuu~..."

Kobato seemed upset as she groaned.

After that, Kobato took her bath, and then spent the rest of the night playing "Magical Hyper Battle 3" with Maria.

I laid out a futon for Maria in the living room, and read a book while glancing at their game occasionally. Maria was getting better and better, and she was starting to put up a good fight against Kobato.

However, Maria started moving sluggishly around 9:30, leading to a series of perfect wins from Kobato.

Maria's eyes were drooping, and she looked like she was already half-asleep.

"Hmph... You have no value as an opponent to me in your current state..."

"Zzzz..."

At the same time Kobato turned off the PS2, Maria flopped down sideways on the couch, and fell sound asleep.

"Guess this is proof that kids who sleep well grow well, huh."

I said with a wry smile as Kobato stared at Maria's chest with a sullen expression.

"I'm going to sleep too!"

She said, and went up to her room.

I carried Maria onto the futon I laid out for her, and started to relax by reading my book, when the phone rang again.

"...It's already 10 o'clock."

I wearily answered the phone.

It was Kate, as I'd expected.

"Sorry for calling you so late at night Onii-chan. Is Maria asleep already?"

"She is."

"I see. She brushed her teeth, right?"

"Ah... now that you mention it, she didn't..."

"What were you thinking Onii-chan!? What if Maria gets a cavity!?"

"I'll make sure she does an extra good job in the morning..."

"No! Have her do it right now!"

"Fine fine... Hey... Are you a siscon by chance?"

"W-w-w-who are you calling a siscon, huh!? Anyway have her brush her teeth for me!"

She hung up.

"Haa..."

I sighed, but woke Maria up anyway, and had her brush her teeth while she was still half-asleep before letting her go back to sleep in her futon.

Nearly the second after I did, Kate called again to see if she finished brushing her teeth.

She hung up, and I thought I could finally relax for real as I started reading, but the phone rang again just past 11 o'clock.

"Tell her not to eat anything after she's brushed her teeth, ok?"

"I told you she's already asleep."

Click.

She hung up, and I confirmed that the normally aloof Kate was, in fact, a siscon.

After that, right as I was about to go to bed around midnight, she called again, telling me to make sure Maria was asleep, and

that she didn't kick the futon off of her. She then kept calling about every 15 minutes, asking about the exact same things until I finally unplugged the phone and went to sleep.

I really need to get Maria to go home as soon as possible...

"Ok, I'll go home! Because I'm a teacher, and an adult!"

The next morning.

When we were eating breakfast I asked Maria, "How about giving up on the runaway thing?" to which Kobato added, " Kukuku... Running away from home is what children do..." which had Maria quickly agree to give up and go back home to the church.

Behold, The Obedient Good Girl!

"Haha, I'm proud of you Maria."

While still feeling surprised at how easily she accepted, I patted Maria on the head, prompting an "Ehehe~" and a happy smile from her.

Now that siscon sister should calm down too.

I plugged the phone back in after we finished eating breakfast, and the phone rang immediately.

"Woah!?"

I was taken aback for a second before I quickly picked up the receiver,

"
MARIIIAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
~~"

and cringed after being greeted by a screech so loud it could've made the whole house shake.

"W-what are you yelling for..."

"Uoah!? O-Onii-chan!?"

Kate came back to her senses, and asked in a panicked voice.

"Maria said she's giving up on running away and is going home , so come get her. See you later."

I hung up after telling her the bare minimum I had to.

15 minutes later, Kate arrived at our house in a taxi.

Holy crap was that fast!

...Maybe it was just me, but it looked like the taxi driver was shaking...

"Come on Maria, let's go home~"

Kate said with a weird face caused by her desperately trying to hide how relieved she was to see Maria.

"Hrmm, yeah I guess I have to..."

Maria said, looking a little unsatisfied, before putting on her shoes and walking out the front door.

Looks like our Takayama wasn't homesick in the least, and would've been just fine staying here.

"Maria, tell Onii-chan you're sorry for being such a bother to him," said Kate.

It took all I had to restrain myself from saying "You were infinitely more of a bother than Maria was."

"Ehh?"

Maria turned around and looked at me.

"Hey~ Onii-chan, can I come over again?"

Maria asked in a pleading tone of voice, to which I replied,

"Yeah, come over whenever you want."

Which was followed by Kobato, who had come out to the front door, yelling

"Don't ever come back, Moronnnn!"

"Shut up poop vampire! I'm definitely coming again! Thanks Onii-chan! The food was really good!"

Maria gave a little bow before turning around and getting in the taxi with Kate.

I watched Maria leave in the taxi as she waved to me saying " Bye bye~!", and then went back inside with Kobato.

Kobato turned on the TV and PS2 immediately after we got into the living room.

"Hey now, you're gonna start playing games this early?"

After I'd said that, Kobato grabbed the controller and did her standard "Kukuku..." chuckle before adding,

"...I must strengthen my magic in preparation for an assault from that foolish pawn of God... I shall have her prostrate herself before my overwhelming might next time she comes, kukuku..."

...*Next time she comes*, huh?

I smirked at Kobato, who couldn't wait for Maria to come again despite telling her to never come back.

After Party

It was the afternoon of the third day since finals had ended.

There was nothing to do at home, so Kobato and I went to the clubroom where we found everyone else, who probably had nothing to do just like us.

That said, it's not like we had any club activities planned, and everyone was just doing whatever they felt like, as usual.

I was playing a handheld game, Yozora and Kobato were reading books, Sena and Rika were playing computer games, Maria was eating potato chips, and Yukimura was spacing out.

"Man, we've got this nice break, but nothing to do."

I said while lazily playing my game.

"That's true. I wonder how a typical group of students usually spends their break."

Yozora said, looking bored.

"Probably shopping, or an amusement park, or the pool, or karaoke... there's tons of stuff, isn't there? It's probably less crowded since it's a weekday too."

"Hmph... damn normals..."

Yozora said with a look of displeasure on her face.

"They're probably all having fun now that they don't have to study for a while... with their friends obviously."

"Heh heh, but I didn't have to study at all."

"Nobody cares about you."

Yozora casually said to Sena's declaration.

"Ah, now I get it."

Rika said all of a sudden in a voice that sounded like she just realized something.

"What do you get?"

"I was wondering why you were all here during lunchtime on a weekday. It's because you're all on break after finals, isn't it!?"

"You just figured that out!?"

I guess it makes sense though, since she spends almost all her time holed up in the Rika room, not having to bother with tests or classes or anything else.

"Now that I think about it, I've seen people in manga go sing karaoke or go out to eat together to relax after their finals. I think it's something called an after party."

"A party to shake off the tiredness from all the tests? I guess I have heard of people doing that before."

Rika and I said, which was followed by Yozora's face lighting up as though she'd thought of something.

"Hrm... then why don't we try it out... That 'after party' or whatever it's called."

"Sure, why not? It can be practice for when we're all normals too."

I said, supporting the idea.

"But I'm not really tired from the tests or anything."

"Then you can go home now. Good bye."

Yozora coldly said to Sena, who then said in a flustered voice,

"W-well now that you mention it I do feel a little tired! Ah~ So tired~! I'm super tired from all those finals~! I can barely stand!"

"I see. If you're that tired then don't push yourself, go and get some rest. I can carry you to the nurse's office."

"I-I'm fine, you don't have to..."

"But I insist, Meat. You can take a good nap in the nurse's office while we have our after party."

"I don't need any rest! I'm doing the after party too!"

"This is only a party for people who are tired though."

Yozora swiftly turned her back to Sena.

"Umm~ Rika never even took any tests to begin with, is it ok if I join though?"

"I'm a teacher and didn't have to take any tests, but I want to have a party too!"

Said Rika and Maria, to which Yozora replied "Do as you please ."

"Then I'll join too..."

"Sorry, but we only have room for six."

"Why are you always such a jerk, you idiot!"

Sena screamed with tears in the corners of her eyes.

"So, what do we do at an after party anyway?"

"Who knows. I think we can just play around together or something."

Rika said, answering my question.

"You want us to start playing around without planning anything in advance...? That's practically the hardest thing you could ask..."

I was in agreement with Yozora.

After a little talking, we decided it needed to feel like a party, so we went down to a convenience store near the school to buy some drinks and snacks, and then set them on the table.

We all gathered around, and then each poured ourselves a glass of juice.

We bought some cola, a 2-liter bottle of orange juice, and a 100ml bottle of Minaglun D (an energy drink with 1000mg of a taurine-mix in it) to drink. Sena, Yukimura, Kobato, Maria, and I all had cola; Yozora had orange juice; and Rika had the Minaglun D.

"Now then... should we have a toast?"

"Sure, we might as well, right?"

I said in response to Yozora, who had her head tilted in confusion.

"Hmm... Then, umm... a toast to the end of final exams?"

Yozora lead the toast in an unenthusiastic voice.

"Cheers~!"

The only one who actually yelled was Maria as the rest of us lightly touched our cups together and drank our drinks normally.

"That hits the spot! I can't get enough of this medicine taste!"

Said Rika, who'd just downed her Minaglun D in one gulp.

...That's the first time I've ever seen someone pour a 100ml energy drink into a glass.

Actually, that's not really something you drink at a party in the first place.

"Auu..."

Yukimura let out a tiny voice after raising the glass to his mouth , and cringed awkwardly.

"? What's wrong Yukimura?"

Yukimura tilted his head down a little, and said,

"It is most embarrassing, but carbonic acid provides me with significant difficulty."

"Huh? Then why did you pick the cola?"

"Because you picked it, Aniki. As I suspected, a true man must not lose to something such as carbonic acid."

"...I don't think it really matters. You don't have to force yourself to drink it.

After I'd said that, Maria made a cute burping noise.

"Ahaha, you can't drink cola? Yukimura you're so girly!"

"Mu... I am not girly."

Yukimura pursed his lips slightly, and then took another sip of the cola.

"Cough, cough, cough-"

He was choking on it pretty bad.

"Hey, are you ok?"

"Aniki... Please forgive me for being so weak..."

Yukimura hung his head in sadness.

"Well, don't worry about it. I'll drink the cola, you can drink the orange juice."

I took Yukimura's glass, and drank the rest of it.

"A-Aniki..."

Yukimura's cheeks blushed for some reason as he stared at me with sparkling eyes.

You don't have to make such a big deal out of me drinking cola...

"An indirect kiss, oh my goddddddddddd!!"

Rika yelled while breathily heavily through her nose.

An indirect kiss...? How old are you?

"Ahaha, cola is so tasty! I get to drink all the cola I want today!"

"Uh, we don't really have enough for that."

We got cola for five people, so there's not that much left as is.

"Maria, if you drink too much cola the carbonic acid will melt your bones."

Yozora said while sipping her orange juice.

"Ahaha, you're so dumb~! That's all made up!"

Looks like Maria knew about that already.

But, Yozora didn't flinch in the least, even after Maria saw right through her lie.

"You're the dumb one, Maria. It's only safe to drink carbonic acid after you're in high school. It was found in a recent scientific study that a child's digestive organs can't break up the acid, which leads to it spreading through the body and melting your bones."

"Ehhh!?"

Yozora pressed on with a dead serious look on her face as Maria started to panic.

"In fact, over 600 young girls a year die in America from having their bones melted by drinking too much cola. Did you not know that the American Pediatrician Union recently declared their opposition to any child under the age of 15 drinking cola?"

"I didn't... A lot of girls in America have been dying from drinking too much cola, huh..."

Maria looked like she totally bought Yozora's story now.

"K-kukuku... M-my immortal vampire body can simply regenerate any lost bones..."

Kobato said with her voice trembling as she stared at her glass.

...Don't tell me you believe Yozora's crap too.

I'm very worried about my little sister's future...

"Uu~ I guess I won't drink cola after all... Do you want it Yozora ?"

"Eh-"

Yozora faintly cringed at Maria holding her glass of cola out to her.

"Y-you can have Kodaka drink it instead."

"Nah, I've got Yukimura's, so I'm fine..."

Then it came to me.

"Yozora, can you still not drink carbonated stuff?"

10 years ago—— I remembered the time I was playing with Sora and we got thirsty, so I bought us some pop to drink, but Sora choked on it spectacularly.

Remembering how Sora blushed as she told me she couldn't drink pop made me miss those days.

"I-it's not like I can't drink it. I just don't like it..."

Yozora said with a beet red face.

"*Still*...?"

Rika twitched as she heard what I'd said.

Crap, me and Yozora being friends was supposed to be a secret.

"C-come on Maria! Have Rika drink your cola! Here, have some cola, go on!"

I took the cola from Maria and handed it to Rika.

"...Very suspicious..."

Rika didn't look like she wanted to let it go, but she didn't say anything more than that.

After we finished our drinks, Yozora and Kobato went back to reading books, this time with snacks, Sena and Rika were back on their computers, and Yukimura returned to spacing out in front of the tea pot.

Maria was the only one who kept on doing nothing but eating snacks.

"...What kind of crappy party is this!?"

I yelled at the Neighbors Club, who'd gone right back to doing the same crap they usually do.

"Oh yeah, we were in the middle of that after party, weren't we?"

Yozora said, as though she'd completely forgotten about it.

"But when you say party, what do you do after eating and drinking a little? Play some games?"

"Ah, if you want games I've got 'Magical Hyper Battle Revolution' for the PS3 with me... Ehehe, Kobato-chan wanna play with me?"

Sena said with a creepy grin on her face, to which Kobato curtly declined by saying "No!"

"Now that I think about it, all the games we have here aren't meant for a lot of people are they~ We don't have a set of playing cards or Uno cards either. We could play 'RomaSaga' or some other LAN game I suppose," said Rika.

"Playing computer games at a party huh... That doesn't feel like something a normal would do."

I said, to which Yozora added "...You're right." along with a nod .

"Hmm... Ah, now that I think about it, you see a lot of scenes where people play the 'King Game'; we don't need anything special to play either."

"The King Game...? What's that?" asked Sena.

"You decide who the king is by drawing lots, and everyone else has to do everything the king says."

Rika's description set Sena's eyes on fire.

"Everything!? I can make Yozora lick my feet!?"

Smack!

Yozora hit Sena on the head with her flyswatter.

"Everyone other than the king has a number they drew, and you don't give orders directly, but do it by saying 'Number 1 do XXX to number 2.' or something similar."

"Then if I was the king and Yozora was number 1, and I said ' Number 1 lick the king's feet.' she'd have to lick my feet, right!?"

"Well, yes she would. The king's orders are absolute."

"That sounds like a great game!"

Yozora hit Sena on the head again, but Sena completely ignored it and continued on.

"I want to play! I want to play the king game!"

"...Hmph, that's perfect... I was just thinking it'd do this stupid piece of meat some good if I brought it to its knees once..."

Yozora gave her approval with a brutal look filling her eyes.

"Rika's obviously OK with it too. Just thinking about making Kodaka-senpai do this and that..."

I hurriedly objected to the King Game.

"Wait, hold on, I'm against this! We really shouldn't do it! I know for a fact that playing the King Game with all of you is going to end terribly!"

"Hmm, I don't really get it, but I get to be a king!? I want to be a king!" Maria exclaimed in approval.

"I am opposed to the idea. My only master is Aniki," said Yukimura.

"Kukuku... I am already the Queen of the Exalted Night..."

I wasn't sure if Kobato was against the idea or for it.

"Looks like we have more people in favor of playing. Alright, then let's play this 'King Game'," declared Yozora.

Kh... I have to do something about this or it's going to end horrible for everyone!

I desperately racked my brain for an answer—— and thought of a great one.

"Ok, but on one condition!"

"Condition?" the rest of the club members looked at me with puzzled expressions.

"First, we all write some orders the king can give on a piece of paper. Then, whoever becomes king doesn't think of a new order, but instead picks an order at random from the ones we wrote earlier."

"Hmm... That's a weird rule, but ok. I just have to draw the order that says Yozora has to lick my feet," said Sena.

I was relieved when nobody else seemed to mind the rule either .

"Hrm... then let's make our lots first," said Yozora.

Thus, the curtains opened on the Neighbors Club's King Game.

"Ok, you all got a lot, right?"

Yozora looked around at the rest of the club members.

We were each holding a piece of paper that either had 'King' or a number one through six written on it.

"Umm... W-who's the king!?"

Yozora said, a little embarrassed, prompting us to open our piece of paper while not letting anyone else see it.

I had the number three written on mine.

"Right here~! I'm the King! Being the king really does suit me, doesn't it?"

Sena happily named herself king.

"That's great, now hurry up and give your order Meat."

"Heh heh, you'll get punished for talking to the king like that you know."

Said Sena as she picked out a piece of paper from the tissue box on the table.

There were 35 orders total (5 from each of us) in there.

My reason for making the king pick orders like this, was to stop the king from giving any super crazy orders.

Because, if you wrote something really crazy as an order, you might end up being the one who has to do it when someone else is king.

Hence, nobody should have written anything too out there.

Hehehe... Behold my brilliant strategy at work...

"Ok, here's the order!"

Sena took a piece of paper out of the book, opened it up, and read the order out loud.

I'm sure it can't be anything too——

"Number four has to put on a swimsuit!"

"Bft!"

I spit a little in surprise.

"What kind of order is this!?"

"Aha, this is one I wrote! Look at me, the first one to be king *and* picking my own order! I was born to be a king!"

"...Sena, you... What would you have done if you had to do that...!?"

I asked, still in shock, and was utterly clueless as to why Sena would write that, but there she was, full of confidence.

Crap... I forgot to think about Sena's lack of thinking...!

"Now~ then, who's number four!? Who's the pathetic soul who has to wear a swimsuit like a super idiot at the end of September while the rest of us wear regular clothes like normal people!?"

Sena happily looked around at the club members.

"Fueehh... An-chaaan..."

...It was Kobato who slowly raised her hand, half in tears.

She was holding the piece of paper with the four on it.

"K-K-K-Kobato-chwan!?"

Sena was sent into a frenzy.

"Ah, uhh, umm, I-I didn't mean to tease you K-Kobato-chan... T-this one doesn't count! You don't have to listen to my order!"

"It's unfortunate, but... any order given must be seen to the end. "

Yozora coldly stated with a mournful expression.

"That is true. A country cannot stand if its master must always change his orders."

Yukimura coolly added.

"...Kodaka's little sister. You were prepared for this when you joined the game, were you not? If you wish to blame someone, then blame that heinous dictator over there..."

Kobato stopped crying and nodded deeply.

"I-it's my fault!? B-but look, we don't even have any swimsuits! We can't do anything about that!"

"I don't have a swimsuit, but I do have some bikini armor. We can use that instead."

Rika casually said before running out of the clubroom.

What Rika brought back to the gloomy atmosphere of the clubroom, was a cosplay outfit that looked like the kind of swimsuit-esque high leg armor female warriors would wear in old fantasy novels that showed off a ton of skin.

Kobato worked up her resolve, and put on the bikini armor in silence.

"...Making me, a noble of the Exalted Night... wear the attire of a savage female warrior... How humiliating... I won't forgive you... I'll never forgive you for this..."

"Uuu... I'm sorry Kobato-chan, I'm sorry..."

Sena got teary eyed after having Kobato glare at her with a true hatred in her eyes.

"Ok, time for round two."

Yozora said, after we'd all drawn our lots for the second time.

"Who's the king? .....Oh, it's me."

Yozora stated, having opened up her own lot.

I pulled the number two.

I prayed Yozora wouldn't get anything big as I watched her feel her way through the box.

I could already tell my plan was a failure after that crazy order from the first round, leaving a non-king such as myself no options but to pray.

Yozora opened up the piece of paper, and—— Her face went red in an instant.

"W-who's the idiot who wrote this...!?"

"? What's it say?"

"...Number five, read the following paragraph in a loud voice."

"The following paragraph?"

"W-who's number five!? Read what's written on here!"

"Ah, that's me! Ahaha!"

Maria named herself, happily for some reason, and took the piece of paper.

"Hmm, I just have to read this?"

"Y-yeah."

Yozora gave an awkward nod.

Maria opened up the paper, and read "the following paragraph" in a crisp, clear voice.

"S-shtopppp! I-I'm cumming! I'm, I'm, I'm cummingggg! Thish is amazing! Thish ish so amazing! It feelsh so good! I'm cumming! It feels so good I can't stop! Ahhh! My mind is going blank!!"

Yozora, Sena, and Kobato (bikini armor version) just stared at the floor with beet red faces.

"W-what the hell are you making people read!?"

I said, facing the obvious culprit behind all of this, Rika.

"Hmm... I really wish one of my three upperclassmen would have had to read that while suffering an agonizing amount of embarrassment, but oh well."

"Hey~ hey~ What was with that weird paragraph? Why was come spelt wrong the whole time?"

I wasn't able to say anything in return to Maria, who'd asked with her head tilted to the side.

"And hey, Rika, what were you gonna do if you got that?"

"I'd read it, obviously. Boldly, and full of glee."

"...Damn pervert..."

Still, she managed to think up an order others wouldn't want to do, but that she could do with ease.

Rika Shiguma, truly a perverted tactician to be feared.

After our third draw, Sena was king again.

"See, I really am a noble existence born to be king! The first round was... unfortunate, but... Uuu, don't glare at me Kobato-chan..."

Sena grabbed an order from inside the tissue box as Kobato stared her down with a cold look in her eyes.

"Umm... The king has to go to the convenience store in front of the school, walk up to the clerk, and then point at their own face and say "Did you see a customer who looked like this just now?" Then, while the clerk is confused, yell "You idiot! That was Lupin!" before running out of the store. Ahaha, what the heck, this is great! I feel sorry for the poor soul who has to—— Wait, **the king** has to! ?"

Sena looked utterly stupefied as she stared at the order.

"Kuhaha!"

A mischievous smile full of satisfaction rose on Yozora's face.

Guess she's the one who wrote that order.

"H-hey, what is this!? Why does the king have to do this crap!? This doesn't count!"

"The king's orders are absolute. Even if it's an order upon himself."

"That is true. A king is meant to be a model for the citizens... A country cannot stand if even the ones making the laws refuse to follow them."

Yozora and Yukimura both added, one after the other.

"Uuu...! Fine! I just have to do it, right!? Uuu, Yozora you idiottt...!"

Sena threw the order away while screaming at Yozora.

I got a good look at the paper she threw, and saw the corners were folded in three.

I almost gasped as I realized it.

This must be something Yozora did so she wouldn't pick these orders when she was king...!

To think she'd come up with a trap like this... Yozora's as fearsome as ever...

Thus, Sena accomplished her task.

"That was amazing... I've got a whole new opinion of you now... " I said.

I went into the convenience store first to make sure Sena did what she was supposed to, and felt a little impressed after seeing her go through that whole farce.

"Uu... I can't ever go to that store again..."

Sena cried with her head hung in shame.

And so, after returning to the clubroom, we moved on to round four.

Rika ended up being king, but she looked a little nervous as she pulled out an order due to everyone having realized that even the king wasn't safe.

"Draw! Order card! Open!"

Rika opened up the order and read it out loud.

"The order! Number one has to show their chest to everyone! ... Wow, this is the worst..."

It was an order that even had Rika creeped out.

But, for some reason, Rika's look of disgust was directed at me, along with a look of disdain from Yozora as well.

"That's my Aniki... So hardcore..." Yukimura said with eyes brimming with respect.

"A low risk high return order that doesn't matter even if you get it yourself... Even Rika hadn't thought of this one... Not bad, Kodaka-senpai..."

"Huh!? H-hold on! I didn't write that!"

I mean, yeah, obviously, I, the only male Neighbors Club member, am the most suspicious in this case, but I swear it wasn't me!

"Ahh, I wrote that one."

Sena said as though it were nothing.

"Y-you... Seriously, what would you have done if you got this order!?"

We were all shocked at Sena.

I remembered that incident from summer break—— Sena's naked body—— causing my face to go all red.

"Heh heh, as if that would ever happen!"

Honestly, where do you get that confidence from...?

"Umm... so who is it? Who has to... show everyone their chest...? "

Rika asked, timidly, and everyone checked their number.

The person who drew the number one lot was———— me.

.....Hence, I showed everyone my chest.

I learned that it's embarrassing to take off your clothes in front of other people, even if you are a guy.

Our fierce battle raged on for several more rounds.

Yukimura was king in round five, and had to sing an a cappella piece.

I hadn't heard him sing ever since we went to that karaoke place , but his voice was as plain as ever... He wasn't tone-deaf or anything, but it was just a very flat way of singing.

Kobato was the king in round six, and the order was to read a paragraph like the one from round two out loud. This time though, the one who had to read was Rika.

And, just as she said, Rika read her own smut paragraph boldly and with glee. The contents would mostly get covered in asterisks anyway, so I'll omit it.

Yozora was king in round seven, and the order was to ask 10 people walking around "Would you rather eat poop flavored curry or curry flavored poop?" which was practically like a taboo to the members of the Neighbors Club, who can barely even talk to others as is.

Luckily Maria got the order, because I'm pretty sure it would've been impossible for everyone else.

By the way, nobody answered when I asked who wrote that cold-blooded order, but I noticed one of the corners was folded in, so it was probably Yozora.

...Adding marks for yourself is great, but what was she planning on doing if someone else picked that order when they were king?

Round eight had Rika as king, with Yozora and Maria doing radio exercises.

They were like polar opposites. Maria was full of energy, but Yozora was clearly embarrassed, and her cheeks were dyed red.

I was king in the ninth round, and the order was for Sena and Rika to run around the track three times.

Sena did it with ease, but our resident hikikomori, Rika, looked like she was about to pass out.

"...Oeh... K-Kodaka-senpai, you sadist... If you're going to tease Rika, please do something that hurts instead of something that tires me out... Gfuh..."

"It's not like I wrote the order, but... well, sorry..."

...By the way, Kobato was the one who wrote the more normal orders from rounds eight and nine.

Maria was king in round ten, and Yukimura had to wear a bald wig.

He seemed strangely happy as he said, "It's as if I've become a true warrior."

He looked more like a defeated soldier to me, but if he's happy about, then I guess it's fine.

"...That's weird... I thought it'd be a lot funnier when I was writing it, but it doesn't really make you laugh."

Sena said with her head tilted to the side.

Right around then, our enthusiasm started to droop. It's probably about time to stop... but, right as I was about to say something,

"Umm, number five tell a joke!"

Sena, the king this round, said in a voice that sounded like she didn't really care.

...I was the one holding the number five lot.

Geez... Everyone was calming down, but now it looks like things are about to get more lively in here.

By the way, I was the one who wrote this order, and this was the first time someone drew one of my orders.

My plan of having an order that wouldn't cause much damage if it hit me finally bore some fruit.

"Alright, guess I'll let you all in on the world's first presentation of my latest joke."

""""Ehhh....."""

Yozora, Sena, and Rika each let out a voice that sounded like they really didn't want to be here for some reason, and even Yukimura and Kobato made strained looks on their faces.

It must be from all the orders they've had to do up until now.

But I'll blow all that away with my hilarious joke!

.....

.....

...

"Ahahahahahahahaha! Ehhh!? I-in the, in the fridge!? Ahaha, that doesn't make any sense! O-Onii-chan, ahahahaha, Onii-chan your jokes are always so funny! Ahahahahaha! You're a genius! Onii-chan you're a joke telling genius, gyahahahaha!!"

Maria was laughing so hard she was holding her sides after hearing my joke "The Man Carrying A Refrigerator".

...And only Maria was.

As for everyone else, they looked exhausted, and were staring at me with a dull look in their eyes.

What's with this ridiculous reaction...

"Haa... I feel really tired now and all, so should we just call it a night?"

Rika said, along with a deep, deep sigh.

"Yeah..." Yozora nodded in agreement.

"Hey hey, come on you guys, you don't have to hold back, go ahead and laugh."

"...Your taste in jokes is so... Well, this is nothing new I suppose. .."

Yozora said, along with a deep, deep sigh.

But, I noticed that the edges of her mouth were lifted, ever so slightly.

"Yozora-senpai, are you laughing?"

Rika asked, having noticed the same strange occurrence as me, to which Yozora replied with a short "Hah," and said,

"I just couldn't help but laugh at how pathetic that whole thing was."

"What's that supposed to mean!?"

Yozora completely ignored my question, and declared,

"Alright, we're all tired, so the next round will be the last."

I was feeling a little unsatisfied at everyone's reactions still, but the 12th round began despite that.

We all drew our lots.

"Who's the king?"

Yozora asked, so we all opened up our lots.

I was number three.

"Ah! Me! I'm the king!"

Sena said while waving her lot back and forth.

"Meat again...?"

Yozora said in an irritated voice.

This is the fourth time Sena's been king out of our twelve rounds.

"Heh heh, I really am one of the humans chosen by God. The word 'King' itself seeks me out as its owner."

"You might be right. The title 'King of Bad Luck' suits you perfectly after all."

"I-I'm not the king of bad luck! It's true I haven't pulled any good orders yet though..."

What, my order wasn't good enough for you?

Having me tell a joke was as good a decision as the Free Markets Act was!

"This is my last chance... I'm definitely getting Yozora to lick my feet!"

Sena shoved her hand into the tissue box, full of vigor. She closed her eyes, and felt around.

"Which one did I write... Hm?"

Sena raised her eyebrows in confusion.

"...It feels like one of the orders is stuck on the bottom of the box ..."

"!"

I got the feeling Yozora twitched for a second there.

"...Ok, this is it! This is the perfect order to end with!"

Sena pulled her arm out of the box at full speed, and read the order out loud.

"Number three has to kiss the king!! ————Wait, whaaaatttttt!?"

Sena let out a scream.

"A... kiss...? That certainly is a standard with the King Game, but I never thought somebody would actually write something so cliché..."

Rika said, in a half-surprised voice.

"A-a kiss...? Umm... w-who's number three!?"

Sena asked, her face a shade of red.

"......I am."

I mumbled, raising my hand into the air.

"Kodaka!?"

Sena's face got redder and redder.

She seriously managed to pick that order of all orders while I have number three... She really is the king of bad luck...

"Kodaka-senpai and Sena-senpai have to kiss..." "Aniki and Sena-anego..." "An-chan..."

Rika, Yukimura, and Kobato all made complicated expressions.

"Ohh, a kiss huh!? That's really mature, ahaha!"

Maria was the only one who seemed to be enjoying herself.

"Tch... Meat..."

Yozora groaned in a voice full of loathing.

"C-come on Kodaka, hurry up and get over here!"

Sena yelled at me.

"Ueh!? W-we're seriously doing it!?"

I could tell my face was getting hot.

"W-we have to do... The king's orders are absolute..."

"O-oh, yeah... Guess... so..."

Everyone's had to do their own orders, no matter how bad they were, up until now.

We can't just skip this one order after all this time.

I moved closer to Sena.

This is just a game... I'll just give her a little peck... I kissed Mom every day when she was alive, it was like saying hi.

"H-here I go..."

Sena said with a nervous expression as she brought her face closer to mine.

That silky blond hair and white skin, those beautiful blue eyes and long eyelashes, her pretty lips——

She usually acts like a total hopeless case, so I never really paid much attention to it before, but when I take a good look at her, I can tell that Sena really is an amazingly cute girl.

And I mean, is S-Sena ok with this?

Is she really ok with k-kissing me...!? If the other guys at school found out about this, they'd probably hate my guts and then I'd never make any friends...

As I thought to myself, Sena's face was getting closer and closer.

There can't be more than 20 centimeters between our lips now.

Sena stuck her lips out slightly, and tightly closed her eyes.

I closed my eyes too.

Right as I could finally feel Sena's breath on my lips——

"Stooooooooopppp!!"

Thwack!

Thwack!

Yozora screamed and smacked my head, then Sena's, with her flyswatter in rapid succession.

"W-what'd you do that for!?"

Yozora's face went deep red at Sena's complaint before saying,

"Y-you just can't do that! It's shameless!"

"W-what do you want me to do about it, the king's orders are absolute!"

"S-s-s-s-shut up, I said you can't so you can't!"

Usually, Yozora can talk Sena down like that, but she's acting like a kid throwing a temper tantrum right now

But, well, I'm relieved she did that.

Then, my eyes drifted to the top of the table.

"Oh, I know——"

I ran to the table with my idea fresh in my mind, and quickly poured a glass full of cola.

It was the glass Sena was using.

I drank the cola I'd just poured into it in one gulp, and declared,

"There, all done!"

""Huh...?""

Sena and Yozora both look at me with puzzled looks on their faces.

"Y-yeah, you know... that was an indirect kiss... D-does that not count...?"

I timidly asked, and was quickly met with a "There's no problem with that at all!" from Rika.

"Kukuku... I suppose that shall do..." "Aniki..."

Kobato and Yukimura looked relieved.

Yozora had a complicated look on her face too, but a few moments later, she declared,

"Ok! That's the end of the King Game!" in a loud voice.

"Muu..."

Sena was the only one who seemed unsatisfied as she rubbed her fingers along her lips, but in the end she simply murmured, "I guess it'd be pointless to do it as part of a game anyway..."

And so, the Neighbors Club's final exams after party came to a close...

The day then continued, and it was now nighttime.

Kobato was asleep, and I was about to get into my own bed as well.

However, the phone started ringing all of a sudden, so I got out of bed to see who it was.

Who's calling at this hour... Kate again...?

I hazily ran that possibility through my mind as I picked up the phone.

The person who'd called, was my father who was currently working overseas—— Hayato Hasegawa.

"Yo, long time no talk."

"Ah, hey."

I gave back a simple reply.

"I'm doing fine I guess. Kobato is too."

That was my answer to him asking how I was doing.

"I see." he replied in a relieved voice.

"So, did you need something?"

"Ah, it's nothing that big really, but..."

It was rare to see Dad not getting straight to the point about something.

"So... what is it?"

"Ah, I just heard this from Zaki, but..."

"Zaki?"

"Kashiwazaki. You met him, right? Pegasus Kashiwazaki."

"Ohh, the chairman."

"Yep."

Now that I think about it, Dad did always call him Zaki.

Because his name was Kashiwa*zaki*, obviously.

It's kind of a weird nickname, but he gets mad if you call him Pegasus so I guess it makes sense.

"So, what about him?"

Did something happen to the chairman?

I asked my question, and Dad answered it in the same kind of nonchalant voice he'd ask me "Get your homework done?" or " What'd you eat for dinner tonight?" in.

"Are you gettin' married to Zaki's daughter?"

...Zaki's daughter.

Pegasus Kashiwazaki's only daughter.

Kashiv
, Sena.

"Huh?"

The End.